

## A "BEACH-COMBER'S" YARN.

BY W. H. MACY.

**TOM CALLIGAN**, before he shipped with us in the Lancaster, had been a resident of Maranua for several years, leading a semi-savage life as a beach-comber. He was a burly specimen of the genus known among seamen as the Liverpool Irishman, with energy enough to give him influence among rogues of his own class and grade, and just enough of intelligence and book-learning to make him a more dangerous man than he would have been if less ignorant. Our officers had much difficulty at times with Tom, who could ill brook the regular discipline of the ordinary American ship, and every now and then set out to have his own way. As Captain Bowen flatly refused to discharge him when we arrived at Honolulu, Tom took his own discharge, by going ashore on liberty, and never returning on board. And that was the last I ever heard of Tom Calligan; for no one cared much about looking him up, and his place was soon after filled by some other adventurer.

But it was because I had Tom for a shipmate that cruise that I am able to throw light upon the mystery which had before enshrouded the fate of the barque *Chloe Ann* and her crew; for once Tom, when in a communicative mood, let out the whole story to me and the cook, and described in his own way the scenes, in which it appeared he himself had been one of the chief actors.

The *Chloe Ann* had sailed, several years before this story was told us by Tom, on a trading voyage from Sidney, and the last intelligence from her came through the report of a whaler, which had spoken her among the Micronesian groups. She had touched at Pleasant Island, and the captain had signified his intention of going further to the westward, among the Caroline Islands, as he expected to do a good business in getting *beche-de-mer*, and then dispose of it in China. But the *Chloe Ann* never entered a Chinese port; and this was the last ever known of her, until the truth was revealed by Tom Calligan.

"I was there," said Tom, "high in the confidence of old Scutleroona, the chief

Nannikin at Maranua. Not a bad name for the old savage, either; for he had scuttled and burned more than one good ship, to my knowledge. I had been there two years on the island, having deserted from the whaler in which I escaped from Norfolk Island."

"But how came you on Norfolk Island?" I asked.

"O never mind; I'm not going back to tell the story of my birth, parentage and education. That has nothing to do with the case of the *Chloe Ann*. You must take just what you can get from me; and perhaps, if you don't let me spin the yarn in my own way just at this present time, I shall shut my teeth again, and you'll never get it. 'Tisn't often I feel just in the mood to run over my past life."

There was no more to be said by me or the cook, and Tom was suffered to go on in his own way.

"We were then getting quite poor at Maranua. Very few vessels had visited the island for the season previous; there was a famine in the tobacco and gunpowder line, and even old Scutleroona's treasury was getting low, though he was a grasping old wretch, and used his power to confiscate almost anything he wanted from his poor understrappers. He had been overhauling the locker and taking account of stock one evening, and I must confess the meagre supply made a mighty poor show for a royal exchequer. He told me that if he did not soon have a chance to replenish out of some vessel he should feel obliged to declare war against the Nannikin of the neighboring island of Orakow, and make a raid with his whole fleet of war-canoes for purposes of plunder. I, of course, had nothing to do but obey orders if called upon to go on such an expedition; but I gave my advice, as far as I dared, against it, telling the old thief I didn't think it would pay, as they were quite as poor, in the things which we wanted, at Orakow as we were ourselves, and the booty wouldn't be worth the cost and sacrifice of life. But he cared as little about a few common men's lives, in such a case,

as the king of any civilized country would—and that's little enough.

"But at daylight the next morning there was a wild hallooing and gathering of barbarians on the beach, for a sail was in sight, making for the harbor on the southwest side of the island. I ran down to examine her with the spyglass. We had but one instrument of this kind, and I had the whole care and charge of it. It was a very powerful one, and was part of the plunder from the French ship—but never mind, that's no part of my story.

"Well, I easily made out that the stranger was a small barque, and from the scarcity of boats, and other signs about her, that she was no whaler. Canoes were launched in a hurry. Old Scutleroona insisted on going himself to visit and examine the ship, and away we went out over the reef, shaping a course to head her off.

"Before we had got alongside of her the Nannikin had made up his mind to take her, and had signified as much to me. She would be an easier prize for us than any whaleship could be, for she was not as strongly manned; and a more valuable one, too, if, as we now judged, she was a trader, and had on board a large stock of the very commodities we wanted.

"Of course, the first stroke of policy was to throw the captain completely off his guard, by pretending the greatest friendliness; and by lying stories of the great abundance of *beche-de-mer* and shells at Maranua, to induce him to come into the anchorage. We soon found that he had never visited the place before, which made the deception all the easier. I at once offered my services as pilot, and under my guidance the *Chloe Ann* was soon worked up into the little smooth basin inside the reef, and brought to in six fathoms, riding by a single anchor, and that her smallest bower.

"The skipper's name was Craig, a short stout man, with a bluff hearty manner about him, and far more courage after an emergency arrived than discretion in guarding against it beforehand. He had only ten men before the mast, and was not as well provided with arms and other means of defence as a vessel on such a dangerous voyage should have been. It was afternoon when we came to anchor; and as we had promised to go with the captain next morning in his boat further up the lagoon,

where we had represented to him that the *beche-de-mer* was very abundant, he decided to give the day up to rest and jollity. Indeed, the man seemed to feel himself in a perfectly safe position, and to be as much off his guard as if he had just anchored his ship in the haven of a Christian port. And this was just what old Scutleroona desired, and had been aiming at.

"Meanwhile, the warriors all had their instructions, and understood them thoroughly. But no word or movement must indicate this until the preconcerted signal should be given; and to lull suspicion, the women still remained in and about the vessel, mingling freely with the crowd. After a time, Captain Craig, having invited me with Nannikin into his cabin, where he set his decanters before us and invited us to drink success to his voyage, proposed to go ashore with us, taking a couple of hands with him, in the little jolly-boat. We, of course, encouraged this, and he ordered his boat away, while we, in the canoe, followed closely in his wake. As we pushed off from the ship a private signal was given, and fully understood; which was for the females to withdraw from the scene—not suddenly, or all at once, but to drop away, a few at a time, so that no notice should be taken by the officers of the barque. Savages, when about to undertake any warlike movement—or, indeed, any ceremony of grave importance—always get their women out of the way. They are not only firm believers in 'woman's sphere' as something entirely distinct from man's, but they seem to think that the very presence of females bodes ill luck.

"When we landed the captain was invited up to the chief's house, where he, in turn, was invited to drink the native beverage, a preparation made by soaking the *Kava* root, being provided in ample quantity. It was nothing new or strange to his taste, as it is commonly used at many of the islands which he had visited. His two oarsmen were meanwhile kept in view and carefully watched by natives detailed for that purpose. And while the *Kava* ceremonies were in progress, reports were made from time to time of how things were going on outside. No attack must be made until the women were all on shore, and this, at the rate they were moving, was not likely to be the case soon enough to suit the impatience of old Scutleroona. For

he, somewhat inflamed by his potations, had for once forgotten his usual wily tactics, and was inclined to precipitate matters. The captain noticed this uneasiness on the part of the Nannikin, and became uneasy in turn. He got up from his seat and moved to the door, where he could get a view of the ship. Now that his suspicions were stirred, his quick eye instantly detected the fact that the women were leaving, while the men still hung round in full force; and a certain something in the general aspect of things indicated danger. Instead of returning to his seat, he passed out, and started down the slope towards his small boat, at the same time calling out the names of his two men. The word was passed quickly to the Nannikin, who, now infuriated to frenzy, and seeing that nothing could be gained by further delay, seized a conch-shell, and blew a tremendous blast upon it, which might be heard even to the opposite side of the bay. This was the signal for war; and until this sound was heard, no native of Maranua would have ventured to break the peace with the strangers.

"But in an instant all was changed, and the onset began simultaneously at all points. The two men who came in the boat with Captain Craig, being taken by surprise, were struck down with clubs where they stood, and quickly disposed of. But the captain himself, seeing that there was no escape in the direction of his boat, turned and stood at bay, with a revolver covering the door where the Nannikin would come out. A tall savage made a blow at him with his war-club, but the captain adroitly dodged it, and quickly changing the direction of his pistol, sent a bullet into the heart of his assailant, who fell dead in his tracks. The rest, with their instinctive dread of firearms, fell back a little in a panic, notwithstanding the fierce cries of old Scutleroona, urging them to close in upon their victim. But no one wished to be the first to advance, as some must die before the captain could be overpowered. It was a gallant sight to see this brave captain standing there, still keeping his aim fixed upon the doorway, while, quick as lightning, he dodged several spears which were hurled at him from flank and rear, not daring to turn his head or lose his guard for a moment, though the cries of his officers and crew, engaged

in mortal struggle, were ringing in his ears. The Nannikin ordered me to advance and take aim at him with my old ship's musket, which was the best we had among us. But I had no idea of being the first to die at the muzzle of that revolver.

"'Go forward and kill him!' screamed the insane old chief.

"'Go yourself!' said I, sulkily; for which I should no doubt have lost my life at the hands of the chief, had he survived. But he had no time then to quarrel with me, and saw no way open for him but to lead the attack himself. He rushed to the door, but the captain's keen eye never wavered, and the ball entered his brain ere he could take another step. At the same moment, having got the aim I wanted, I drew the trigger of the old musket, but she missed fire! Before I could get her cocked, the captain's third shot broke those two fingers—you see, there—and I was disabled from using the gun. But a club, hurled with great force by the Nannikin's son, at the next instant struck the captain across the side of his head, while a spear pierced his back at the same moment. He fell to the ground, and was at once overpowered, and put to death with numerous wounds; but not until another savage had fallen under the fourth bullet from the revolver.

"Meanwhile, the work of blood was progressing on board the *Chloe Ann*, where the crew were taken unawares; and though there was some fighting, and several of the natives were wounded, there was nothing like organized resistance to the attack for which they were quite unprepared. In half an hour after the first onset the barque was in our hands, and not a man left alive; for the savages acted upon the principle that 'dead men tell no tales.'

"There was a great wailing and clamor at the 'wake' of old Scutleroona that night, and the body was prepared for burial by being swathed in mats until the bundle bore no semblance in form to a human body. His son Corniboot, who, besides his family claims, had won great credit for having given the first wound to the brave Captain Craig, was installed in authority as head Nannikin of the tribe; and the orgies were kept up until morning. All the bodies of the murdered white men were burned, together with their clothing, which might have told tales, and which was of no

use to savages in so mild a climate as that of Maranua.

"But the work of plunder and pillage called for the attention of all the next day; and though the young king attempted to superintend and regulate this work, he found his new authority quite insufficient. Each warrior sought to appropriate the lion's share; but I must say that Corniboot afterwards proved himself quite as much of a pirate as his lamented father, and took what he wanted from his subjects wherever he could lay hands on it.

"The *Chloe Ann*, after she had been stripped of all that was valued by the robbers, was towed up into the lagoon, where it was not likely that any other vessel ever would anchor, and there set on fire. The sight of the bonfire was highly enjoyed by the savage spectators. They danced, and yelled, and drank *Kava*, until nature was quite exhausted; and the priests, or 'orators,' never ceased their boastful chants of the prowess of the warriors until all sank together into insensibility.

"I was disgusted with all this business; and though I have been through many rough scenes in the course of my life, and cannot profess to be very sensitive on moral points, I could not help feeling that I had got into very bad company this time; and, furthermore, that it was only at great risk of my life that I could ever get clear of my associates. I might have warned the captain of his danger, but I hardly dared to do this, as the least sign of watchfulness on his part would have aroused the chief's suspicions of me, and my life would have been the forfeit. I had tried to take no active part in the affray; and among all the thoughts of my wickedness that haunt me in my sober moods, it is always a satisfaction to remember that my gun snapped, as I have not the blood of the brave Captain Craig on my hands. At that moment I could do no less than fire at him in defence of my own life. Still, I confess that my refusal to obey the orders of old Scutleroona was quite as much from cowardice as from any qualms of conscience. The bold bearing of the captain really frightened the whole of us.

"I found young Corniboot a much harder master to serve than his father had been, and I lived a miserable life for the next two years. As I possessed a secret which, if disclosed, would call down the vengeance

of the British government upon the islanders, it is not strange that they regarded me with suspicious eyes. I was not allowed to go on board of any ship during all this time. The idea of being thus cooped up, at the mercy of a capricious savage, who might, at any time take a fancy to knock me on the head, or impale me with a spear, was horrible enough; and of course my mind was made up to seize the first opportunity to escape, even at any risk of life.

"I had a small canoe, in which I was accustomed to go outside the reef, torching for flying-fish; but as I generally went in company with many other canoes, no one thought of my escape by this means, as it would not be easy for one canoe to leave the fleet without being observed. But here was my only chance, and I resolved to make the most of it.

"One day, the whole population had been out driving a brisk trade with a ship which had been lying off and on. I was kept confined all day, with a guard over me, lest I should by any chance communicate with those on board; but making a pretext for going outside the house a moment, I had seen enough of the vessel at a distance to assure me that she was an American whaler. From what I heard dropped by Corniboot after his return to the shore, I also learned that the captain intended to run down to the island of Orakow, and lie off and on there the next day. Here then was my opportunity.

"My only companion in the little canoe that night was a lad of about fifteen, who was the son of a chief, and whose heathen name I always Anglicized into 'Bob.' I contrived to get the lee position of the fleet and pretending to be entirely absorbed in the sport of torching for the fish, I suffered my little boat to drift, insensibly increasing my distance from all my consorts. At the proper moment, I fell against Bob as if by accident, knocking the torch out of his hand, overboard. He opened his mouth to utter an exclamation; but it was choked in the utterance by my grip upon his throat. I had a gag ready, and the boy was soon quiet enough in the bottom of the canoe.

"A little more drift was allowed to get out of sight and hearing of the fleet, and then I trimmed my sail of matting and bore away with a free sheet, shaping a course as near as I could judge for the island,

Orakow, which is about forty miles from Maranua. My light craft glided swiftly along, and soon after the moon rose. I was gladdened with a sight of the land looming in the distance. I had relieved Bob of the gag, and allowed him to sit up; but he understood the situation, and had sense enough to submit to my orders. On we sped until daylight disclosed to me the ship which I had so much desired to see. She was but a few miles distant from the land, and headed in towards it. I was for a time entirely absorbed in looking at her and at the beautiful shores, for Orakow is an island of great natural beauty; but my fellow-voyager, Bob, naturally looked to windward, and I caught sight of what looked like a glimmer of joy in his eye. Turning my head and glancing astern, I saw the sail of a canoe at no great distance—another look, and I could see her hull as she rose upon a sea. I stood up on the gunwale; I could see another and yet another coming down before the breeze. They were larger canoes than mine, and could make more rapid way under the pressure of their immense 'leg-of-mutton' sails. The swiftest vessels of the fleet were evidently in hot pursuit of me. There would be no safety for me in landing at Orakow, and the ship was yet so distant from me that I could not afford to laugh at my pursuers.

"I trimmed my sail to do its best, and ordered Bob to paddle for dear life. The rogue did not do this with a very good grace, for of course he desired to be overtaken; and I could not ply my own paddle, for the canoe would lose way too fast by yawing about, if left to herself. I must stick to my post in the stern and keep her straight. I exhorted and swore at the lad, but he evidently put out very little strength upon his paddle, though he continued to make the motions, merely from fear of a crack over his head. Every time I glanced behind me, the pursuers loomed nearer and nearer; and I could soon make out that the leading canoe was that of Corniboot himself.

"I stripped off the shirt which I wore (jumper-fashion, outside of my trousers like all beach-combers), and attached it to a stick as a signal to attract the attention of those on board the ship. Of course they would take no interest in this grand canoe regatta, until they knew that one of the

parties was a white man. I worked myself into a high state of excitement until I saw by the manœuvres of the whaler as she luffed sharp by and made more sail, that this interest was awakened. Then I forced myself to be calm, and prepared for a struggle in which I meant to be killed rather than be taken back into captivity.

"Gradually and steadily the Naunikin's canoe gained upon me, impelled by her great sail and by four pairs of nervous arms plying their paddles with a will, and seeming none the less fresh for their laborious chase which had lasted all night. I could see the dreadful grin of exultation in Corniboot's face, and realized what a cruel fate mine would be, if he got me again into his power. The next canoe was only a few ship's lengths astern of his, and others were coming up, the men at the paddles making the clear morning air vocal with their yells of triumph and delight. If the ship would only fire a shot from her big gun, now!—or fire the gun with powder only, for that would answer the purpose quite as well. Her maintopsail swings in aback; and down comes a whaleboat from the davits into the water. 'Hurrah!' I cried in my wild excitement, for I felt that there was a chance to be saved yet!

"But the whaleboat, though light and swift, must pull to windward; and it seemed an age, though only a minute in reality, before the men got ready to lay back on their oars with that long and regular stroke in which whalers can excel all other men in the world. Nearer and nearer—the large canoe already laps by my quarter—the steersman gives her a sheer to lay her aboard of me, and the man in the bow seizes my gunwale with eager grasp—but my paddle, swung with all the strength I possessed, descends edgewise upon his fingers, crushing the bones—and we are again separated, while his howls of pain are frightful to hear. I have gained a little way by this operation, and while there's life, there's hope!

"It is evident, however, that I must prepare for another crisis before the whalers can arrive; for the large canoe soon begins again to lessen the distance between us. My boy Bob also shows signs of treachery and a desire to give aid and comfort to the enemy, as it was natural that he should do. He refuses now even to make the motions of paddling, and is en-

couraged to set me at open defiance. Again the canoe comes up alongside; and as I raise my paddle to strike the nearest savage, the lad closes with me and grasps my arm!

"For an instant, I was helpless; but letting go my paddle, I seized the luckless boy by the neck and the leg, and darted him bodily head first, full in the face of Corniboot himself, whose face, illumined by that dreadful grin, was now within two feet of me. The shock was so severe, that both were knocked overboard, bleeding and partially stunned. Another savage makes a grab at me to drag me into the Nannikin's canoe; but I slip through his arms like an eel, and diving, come up on the off-side, and strike out, swimming towards the approaching whaleboat.

"My own little skiff had broached to when left to her own guidance; and as the two lay grappled, side by side, the whale-

boat coming stern on in full career, dashed into them, making a complete wreck of both the frail structures. Poor Bob and Corniboot, who appeared to be seriously hurt, were helped into the next canoe, which was now close at hand, while willing hands and strong arms pulled me into the boat. We did not stop to parley; the disappointed barbarians, howling louder than ever, took the back track for Maranua, and a few minutes later, I was telling my story on board the *Vesper* of New London.

"That is, I mean I told a part of my story, but I have never let out the real facts about the *Chloe-Ann* until now. As wicked as I am I have always been sorry for the part that I had in the affair, and wish that I had forewarned Captain Craig, even at the risk of my life. He was an unwise and foolhardy man—but a brave one even to the death."

## A PRETTY YOUNG LADY.

### A TALE OF HOME LIFE.

BY THEO. GIFT.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE SCHOOLROOM AT NO. 15.

AN uncommonly wet evening! Not so much rain as fog and drizzle—London fog and London drizzle. In the atmosphere, a dim whitish blur, broken here and there by smears of red, where the gaslamps were beginning to twinkle through the murky air. In the square, drops of moisture distilling with a dreary trickle from every twig, and hud, and hough. At the corner, a policeman dimly revealed by the shine of his oilskin cape under the gaslamp. Hidden somewhere in the fog in front of a neighboring house, an organ grinding away dismal at that sweetest and most mangled of all sweet and mangled waltzes—“*Il Bacio*.” Further still, and deeper in the fog and mud, a street singer quavering shrilly among the top notes of one of the Christy Minstrel melodies. “Fair, fair, with golden hair,” came faintly over the swaying trees and thickening darkness—“Fair, fair, with golden hair, sang a lone mother while weeping.”

The “lone mother’s” voice had a gin-cracked quaver, an asthmatic wheeze, which irritated the footman at No. 4. He even meditated a sally for the purpose of giving chase to the nuisance, but his hair was just freshly powdered for dinner, and London fogs are surcharged with sooty particles which stick, and so he restrained his warlike desires, and submitted to the annoyance.

It was not audible enough to be disagreeable at No. 15, on the other side of the square, the house whose lighted drawing-room windows threw a flickering weirdly yellow glare over the dark grass plots and blackened shrubs across the pavement. It was only firelight within, or else the blinds had been down; but it sparkled and danced right merrily on pale green walls and bright mirrors, on pictures, and photographs, and old china; on gipsy tables, rich in home-made point lace, and big furry rugs cunningly obscuring the worn patches on the Turkey carpet; on curtains of ruby damask, which looked quite new and brilliant in the

ruddy light, and curtains of white lace hiding their darned parts in graceful folds; last, not least, on the back view of a young lady gazing through the blurred and misty panes, as if in a vain effort to make out the “lone mother” afore-mentioned.

“*Hateful weather!*” said Kate. “*Vile hateful weather!* O, how damp and cold they will be!”

She came out into the firelight as she spoke, a girl of nineteen or thereabouts, with a quantity of wavy bronze-colored hair, knotted up on the top of her head; with round well-opened brown eyes, and nose fine at the bridge, and square at the tip; with red sharply-curved lips, always apart, and a determined little chin cleft in two, like a white-heart cherry; with cheeks flushed with health, and dented by two infantine dimples; and arms and throat white as milk, and round and soft as a yearling babe’s: a girl whose first appearance gave you an overpowering sense of *life*—life pure and healthy, and vigorous as a young forest tree; whose voice had a sort of jubilant defiance in its fresh young tones, and whose laugh rang out with the clear joyous vibration of a peal of *wedding-bells*: a girl who might have stood for Canova’s *Hebe*, and whose appetite was as healthy as her mind.

The firelight seemed to like her, it hung about the ripening curves of her young round figure so lovingly, and kissed with a warm tender glow the shapely cream-white hands stretched out to meet it—the saucy honest face bent down above it.

“Five o’clock,” said Kate, looking from the vaguely flickering reflections of herself in the mirror over the fireplace, to the old-fashioned Dresden clock on the chimney-piece; “five o’clock—and they won’t be here for another hour. I think I’ll get some tea.”

She was rather fond of talking to herself when there was no one else to talk to, preferring singing, or even soliloquy, to the alternative of silence. As her light feet went tripping down the broad shallow stairs, and across the hall, with its chessboard-like surface of black and white marble, she was

humming the refrain of "John Brown's Body" in so joyous a key, that three younger sets of lungs in the schoolroom took it up, and greeted her with a chorus as she entered laughing.

"My dears, pray!" cried Miss Smith from her seat behind the tea-tray. "Eva, you too! Good evening, Miss Bellew. Shall I give you some tea?"

"Goodness gracious, Kitty, how swell you are! and what have you dressed so early for?" broke in Madge (No. 3, and *état* twelve), springing up from her chair, and jerking half the contents of her teacup over the cloth, in her hurry to inspect Kate's attire. Poor Miss Smith uttered a second remonstrance, and Eve (No. 2, and *état* fifteen), ably seconded her. [N.B.—Some of the tea had gone over her dress.]

"I never knew any one so rough and vulgar as Madge," she observed, in an icy little tone of disgust, which quite extinguished the governess's patient "Madgel Madge!"

Madge paid little attention to either. Bigger than Eve already, and at that clumsy age when the unshaped female form goes in where it ought to come out, and comes out where it ought to go in, she had planted a hand on either side of Kate's waist, and twisted her round for a better contemplation of the crisp white muslin and carnation-colored bows, which harmonized so well with the wearer's lips and cheeks.

"Isn't she a swell, just?" cried Madge, who delighted to use slang for the mere pleasure of seeing Eve's lips tighten shudderingly; but she got no second rebuke, Eve merely asking as she handed her sister a cup of tea:

"Why are you dressed so early, Kate?"

"Because I got tired of doing nothing," said Kate, laughing, and extricating herself from Madge's grasp to sit down in the well-worn armchair by the fire, and put her feet on the fender. "I never can do anything when I am expecting Dick home; and I thought dressing would pass the time away as well as anything else."

"And is all that 'goffring' and finery for Dick?" asked Eve, with a natural sourness emanating from the maternal warning earlier in the day that she would dine with the three juveniles that evening, "company" being expected.

"Dick, indeed!" broke in Master George, a stout bullet-headed urchin of ten, looking up from the plate of bread and marmalade

he was discussing. "Dick! She don't dress for him. Don't you know there are lawyers and people coming?"

"Ah! I had forgotten the new lawyer," said Eve, dryly. "So the red bows are for him, Kate? Well, when I am out, I will wait to see what manner of fish are in the stream before I dress my flies for them."

"Is you going to catch fiss, Katie?" said little Dottie, turning up her innocent face, with wide brown eyes wonderfully like Kate's, from her corner under Miss Smith's wing. "Will oo take me? I's be welly good, and carry ze bastet so nicely."

"Kate likes to capture all the fish," said Madge, bursting out laughing. "She does not want to keep them—do you, Kittle? You'll throw them all back into the water for Eve afterwards."

"Of course I do," said Kate, turning her bright face round, "and of course my bows are for the new lawyer. I am trembling now lest Dick should hug all the starch out of my frills before his friend sees them. I want him to like me? And why not? Every one does generally; why shouldn't he?"

"How do you know they do?" asked Eve, satirically.

"By their ways and manners, of course. Don't you know when people like you?"

"Nobody ever does," observed George, carefully removing some superfluous marmalade from his cheek with the end of his tongue; "she's too disagreeable."

"Master George," said the governess, "that is not the way to talk of your sister."

"I am used to it," said Eve, with dignity; "and I must say I should try to make people like me by what I was, rather than by what I had on."

"People like Kate without her trying," put in Madge, warmly. "I heard Mrs. Fisher telling mamma that she was the very nicest girl at the last ball; and you know Mr. Luscott fell in love with her the—"

"Madge, my dear!" cried Miss Smith, shocked. "What do you know of falling in—ahem! No one is talking of such a thing."

"Certainly not," said Eve. "I don't think there is much love in what Kate calls her flirtations."

"Eve!" said Miss Smith, reprovingly.

"I only call it flirting," cried Kate, reddening warmly, "because if I didn't, nasty people would. They always do say a girl is flirting if she is cheerful, and makes no

humbug about liking to talk to pleasant people, and liking pleasant people to talk to her, and care for her, and—”

“Well, you need not get so red and hot over it,” observed Eve. “You may call it flirting, or not flirting. Anyhow, I don’t agree with it; and I don’t think you’ve any right to call people humbugs who—”

“My dear Eve,” said Miss Smith, “do you know what flirting means? Miss Belliew was only joking; no wellbred young lady would think of such a thing.”

“Is me a wellbred lady?” said little Dottie, anxiously. “My hands always unner de table.”

“You’re a darling duck,” said Kate, pouncing on, and kissing her, “and the sweetest little lady out, that you are. I say, youngsters, what’s the matter with Eve, that she’s so cross this evening? Has she been greedy, and eaten up that pot of Devonshire cream which yesterday turned sour?”

Madge was busy maintaining a silent scuffle with George for the possession of a particularly crumby piece of bread. She turned round now with a mischievous laugh; and George instantly seized the bone of contention, and stuffed one-third of it into his mouth, to make “assurance doubly sure.”

“Cream? No, Kittie; she’s been eating a dish of herbs in the schoolroom, and hated withal, instead of going in to the stalled ox and what-you-may-call’ems in the dining-room! That’s what’s the matter with her.”

“As if I cared about such a trifle!” Eve answered, loftily, with a toss of her smooth little flaxen head. “It only shows Dick’s love of his family, that he would ra her see any one else on the first day of his coming home from college.”

“Dick does love his family,” cried Kate, flushing up again. “Dick is a darling. Of course he likes us to ask one or two people to meet Mr. Clive. When a man brings his greatest friend home, it’s only natural he should wish to do him a little honor; and you know the table only holds six cosily. It is very unkind of you to say anything against Dick, Eva.”

“O never mind Eva, Kittie,” broke in Madge, pushing away her cup and plate. “Tell us what the ‘stalled ox’ is to-day. We all smelt duck quite plainly; but it was mixed up with something else—I said pastry, but George thought it was bacon, and

that means fowls, of course. We’ve got a bet on it. Which has won?”

“I don’t know, I’m sure,” said Kate, with that happy ignorance of all culinary and housekeeping matters so natural in our young English matrons to be! “I suppose I shall see when I sit down to it. Smell a little harder as it comes up stairs, George, and perhaps you’ll find out.”

“Sall I help you smell, Georgie?” asked Dottie, inflating her little nostrils in readiness. “I tan smell twite hard—tan’t I, Miss Smiff?”

“Little girls never smell,” said Miss Smith, primly; “it is not good man—Madge, my dear!”—as Madge sent her chair over backwards in her hurry to get to Kate.

“I didn’t do it on purpose, Miss Smith. Do wait one moment, Kittie. I want to know if Mr. Clive is a relation or not. Eve says he is.”

“O dear, no—at least, only by courtesy. He’s—let me see—a stepson of one of papa’s second or third cousins. That is no relation to us, you know; but I believe Dick and he call cousins, and so I suppose we shall do the same. Dick wants him to feel quite at home here.”

“A man and a brother,” said George, pushing away the marmalade dish with a deep sigh—whether the result of repletion, or the melancholy courtesy of leaving the last and very least portion of that delicacy unappropriated, is not known. “I hope he will be a jolly sort of fellow, who’ll take us out, and stand tarts, and that sort of thing. Dick never does.”

“Dick hasn’t time,” said Kate, winching visibly at any word against her elder brother.

“Miss Smith can tell you grown-up men have too many friends and engagements to be always taking their family about. Now then, what next?”—as George stayed her exit a second time by jumping up and putting his back against the door.

“Stoop, Kittie;” (in an ingratiating whisper) “promise to bring me something from the dessert; not just a biscuit, like last time, but something nice.”

“And bwing me something nice, too, Kitty,” put in Dottie, clinging with her fat hands to Kate’s sash. The elder girl stooped down and kissed her laughingly.

“You little wretches—a likely story! Why, I brought you those biscuits at the risk of disgracing myself forever and ever; and then I had on a silk dress with a pocket

'convenient.' Fancy Mr. Clive seeing a handful of figs and raisins transparently visible through this!"—holding out her cloudy skirts with a merry laugh. "Move out of the way, Georgy-Gorgy!"

"You could smuggle it in your handkerchief, Kate. Just a peach?"

"A peach! when they cost a mint at this season too! What next? Good-night, Dottie dumpling. Now, George, let me go."

"O, very well. I'm off parole, then, that is all."

"O George!" (from Madge) "you mean greedy thing!"

"Greedy yourself, Madge. You know you always got the biggest share."

[N.B.—Some little while back, the exit of the gentlemen from the dining-room had been, I grieve to say, the signal for a raid on the dessert, of which Tom the page-boy had proved an inefficient defender. George had, in consequence, been put on honor by his mother not to continue these enterprises, the fruits of which were shared with Madge, who also came in for her share of blame.]

"Not when I'm on parole, George."

"Yes; but mamma said when we were, we should have something nice next day."

"Well, wait till dinner to-morrow, and you'll have something."

"I don't like waiting. I—"

"Master George, is this proper gentlemanly behaviour? Really, Madge, I wish—"

"I'm not doing anything, Miss Smith. It's George won't let Katie go. Katie, make mamma come up from dinner quick. Eve and I want to see what Mr. Clive is like."

"I can't, Madge. Mrs. Marryatt always sits so long over her wine."

"Put a pin in her chair."

"Put some vinegar in her wine."

"O dear! are the Marryatts coming? That horrid man! I do hate him so."

"Because he will pat your cheeks. So?"

"Well, George, would you like to be patted like a prize-pig?"

"Perhaps he thinks you're like one."

"I'm not nearly as stout as you."

"Yes, you are; look at your waist!"

"Don't be rude, sir. You burst a button off your waistcoat at dinner on Friday."

"It wasn't at dinner; it was turning a wheel."

"O what a cram!"

"My dear Madge, I—"

"O hush, please—I beg your pardon!"

(from Kate). "What in the name of goodness is that?"

That was a man's voice from the drawing-room floor—a familiar voice, too, calling out:

"Hallo! Katie! Somebody! Is there no one at home?"

"It's Dick!" cried Kate, in an agony. "O!" And hurled herself at the door, scattering George, and rushing up stairs like a white whirlwind.

In the noisy babel of the schoolroom, no one had heard either the expected knock at the door or the voices in the hall; and Kate, who had meant to be waiting ready to seize on her brother and welcome his friend in the very moment of their arrival, was utterly taken aback by the shock of hearing them above.

Forgetting altogether the graceful little greeting she had prepared for Dick's hero in the overwhelming delight of Dick's presence, she tore up stairs, stumbling over her white flounces in her haste, and flung her arms round the first of two dark figures dimly visible against the firelight background of the drawing-room doorway.

## CHAPTER II.

### KATE FORMS AN OPINION.

FORTUNATELY it was Dick. I don't think people often make mistakes of that sort off the stage. Besides, Dick's head was flaxen, and stood two inches lower than his friend's. He reddened slightly in the darkness when half choked by two warm white arms, while an impetuous voice stammered out, "O Dick dear! to think of our not hearing you come! And I was watching for you. O, I'm so glad you're here; and—O dear! how your mustache has grown!"

She had quite forgotten the stranger, you see; and I think—I'm not sure—that Dick remembered him more than he did his pleasure at being so warmly welcomed. Anyway, he resisted the cowardly feeling, and kissed his sister with a sort of defiance as he said:

"Why, Katie, you'll eat me up. Here's my friend Clive. Haven't you a word for him as well?"

Letting go of Dick with a sort of feeling that she had "gushed," and yet with a happy confidence that even gushing, in this undemonstrative age, was pardonable when she was the gusher, and Dick the subject,

Kate turned with a ready mingling of smile and color to the visitor; and saw, by the glimmer of firelight—what she had never seen before in any face of man when turned in her direction—a sneer!

It was very slight, so slight and faint indeed as to be hardly distinguishable even in a brighter light, save by a very quick-witted person. Unfortunately Miss Bellew was very quick-witted. She distinguished it at once, and in one and the same moment hated Mr. Bernard Clive with a fierce and deadly hatred, which manifested itself in an immediate straightening of all the Hebe curves in her lithe young figure, and the frigid bend of her head, as with face "darkly, deeply, beautifully red," she pronounced the formal greeting:

"We are very happy to see you, Mr. Clive. I beg your pardon for not noticing you at first."

Dick was disappointed. He knew Kate to the core, and was well acquainted with her two forms of manner, the outspokenly cordial and outspokenly sharp. Naturally, he thought the former had been bespoken for his friend, and felt aggrieved at this chill politeness.

"Let us come into the drawing-room. "Isn't my mother at home? and are there no lights in the house?" he said, sharply, drowning something Clive was saying about needing "an apology for intruding on domestic reunions"—something which sounded like an appendix to the sneer, Kate thought. She was quite unconscious how bewitching the angry flush made her, as, reaching up one hand to light the centre lamp, she let the pure mellow light stream down on dimpling cheek and gold-bronzed hair; and all the soft white curves of arm and dress relieved against a dark-green background of dainty fragile drawing-room ferns.

Dick was not a very wise young man, and had not much to be proud of on his own account. Painfully slight, with flaxen hair like Eve's, and light blue eyes, which looked dark by reason of an unhealthy purplish shade round them, he made the most striking contrast to his favorite sister that could well be found. He was only twenty-one, and yet there were little crows'-feet at the corners of his eyes, and little lines on his forehead, and more lines about his mouth: small unholy signatures that gave him an old worn look, which went oddly with his

fair hair and soft mustache. He was old poor Dick! almost worn out and used up before he had gained his majority. He had run through life so quickly as, like that babe in the ballads, to be "elderly, elderly too," at the age when most young men are almost boys; and you could see it in the slight stoop he had when "off guard," and in the nervous movements of his slight thin hands, as well as in those telltale lines—lines which had graven answering ones, deep and broad, across his mother's brow.

I am afraid he was no great comfort to that lady, although he was her firstborn and had been her idol. She had adored him, and flattered him, and spoilt him in every way since his boyhood; and yet he had not turned out either self-denying, well-conducted or energetic. I doubt if he was even grateful; spoilt children seldom are. On the contrary, he had been expelled from school, and almost driven into collège; had learnt nothing, and spent heaps of money; and was now home in disgrace, rusticated for a year in consequence of some "scrape" worse than ordinary—some scrape so bad that only the vaguest rumors of it had reached Lady Margaret and her confidante Kate. And yet when the culprit signified that he was bringing with him a distant connection who had distinguished himself at college, and at thirty years of age had made a name at the Bar, and returned to Alma Mater to take a fellowship—and had ordered that a room should be got ready for this hero, and certain guests, legal and otherwise, invited to meet him—his mother and sister never dreamt of disobeying, but were, on the contrary, rather gratified at knowing a means for insuring their idol being in a good temper on his return. He had come home in disgrace once before, and had been in a bad temper. Lady Margaret and Kate remembered that first evening painfully.

Of course they never dreamt of resenting his humors. Women, womanly women that is, seldom do. When he offended his great-uncle Lord Lovegoats by declining that living for the adorning of which his noble relative had allowed a hundred a year towards college expenses, and had curtly refused to go into the church at all, or do anything unconnected with a red coat, Lady Margaret had almost gone down on her knees to coax her uncle into continuing the young reprobate's allowance, and keeping the living

open for Tom, who was now at Rugby; and Kate made vigorous (but ineffectual) love to an old general in the neighborhood, to induce him to use his interest for getting her brother a commission in the Blues. And ever after Mrs. de Ponsonby spoke of her as "that fast Miss Bellew, who quite shocked the general by her way of going on."

Some people thought Eve would turn out a nicer girl, "more soft and feminine;" but Kate was quite unaware of these strictures, and had a happy way of believing in every one's good disposition to herself, until startled by some overt proof to the contrary, such as Mr. Clive's sneer. She did not often come across one.

Lady Margaret was in the room by this time, had shaken hands with Clive, welcoming him in a few cordial words—just what Kate had meant to say—and had kissed her son affectionately, but with a sort of *arriere-pensee* as to the reason of his being home at all at that time. She loved him so dearly, this black sheep of hers, and yet he was so black! Why had he not kept to his books and consented to the church? He would have been provided for then; and George would have been at school instead of dawdling on with Miss Smith. It was all very well for Kate to say, "Dick is not fitted for the church, mamma"—and he certainly was not—but, as Lady Margaret said, "How many go into the church without being fitted for it, and yet get on very well! And Guttlesbury-in-the-Marshes is such a nice quiet village, he couldn't have done anything very outrageous there."

I am afraid, Lady Margaret, that the quietness of Guttlesbury-in-the-Marshes was one reason against it in Dick's eyes. Lady Margaret thought the same, as did Kate, in her heart; but when you are very hard up, and have seven children, and there is a profession and income offering itself to the eldest, it is provoking if he won't take it. Lady Margaret was an earl's daughter, but her father had neither been a rich nor economical man; and it was thought a good thing when Lady Jane, who was not handsome, became a Catholic and took the veil; and an equally good thing when her sister, at seventeen, married a gentleman who was something in the Woods and Forests.

The Woods and Forests had maintained her very well, kept a handsome house within five minutes' walk of Hyde Park, and a well-appointed brougham; and never obliged

its consort to trouble her head about money matters or prudential calculations. Everything went very smoothly while Mr. Bellew lived. The pity was that he didn't go on living, but went and died instead: died just as Kate was beginning to think of the delight of coming out and being presented in another year, and Dick had been put into the hands of an expensive tutor to be crammed for college.

Lady Margaret called on her uncle Lord Lovegoats, in floods of tears, and talked of the workhouse. It is even reported that she was heard to murmur something relative to "a mangle," or "lodgings for respectable single men." And, indeed, an income under two thousand a year is not much to keep up a household containing seven children, and four or five servants—one son at Rugby, another (whose chief correspondence with his family consisted of appeals for money) at Oxford, a governess for the rest, and a residence in the aristocratic precincts of Gresham Square, Hyde Park. Lord Lovegoats, too, was not as sympathetic as he might have been; or as Lady Margaret thought he might have been. He did indeed allow Dick a hundred a year for the present; and he kept a horse for Kate, briskly observing that as his niece's first duty was to get that young lady married, it was only fair to assist her in showing off the youthful Circassian in a style of equality with others in the same rank.

He kept a horse for Kate—had indeed chosen it with care, and made it a present to her—but he did not add a groom, or an animal for that individual to ride on, until Lady Margaret's frequent hints as to the great additional expense entailed on herself by Kate's new favorite, brought one of the Lovegoat grooms to the house, with the intimation that he had been ordered to attend Miss Bellew in all her future rides.

Myson used to come every day at the same hour, mounted on a very decent hack himself, and leading Kate's; and unless it were absolutely raining cats and dogs the young lady made a point of going, lest her great-uncle might think his kindness unappreciated, and revoke it.

Attentions from relations are sometimes a little onerous, as you know; and as Myson soon let out in the servants' hall that he had no other duty at home but to look after Miss Bellew's horse and horsemanship, and had indeed been hired for that sole and only

purpose, Kate sometimes asked (in private) why on earth Uncle Theo didn't give them the groom, instead of lending him. He would have been so useful at Gresham Square, and might have obviated the necessity of keeping that boy in buttons, whose appearance at door and table gave scenileness and style to Lady Margaret's establishment.

Lord Lovegoats, however, had his own ideas on these subjects, and they were not identical with those of his great-niece. Still, he rather liked the girl, was proud of her appearance, and not unfrequently sent her ten pounds for a new balldress, or tickets for the opera during the season.

Mrs. General de Ponsonby said she did not wonder that Kate Bellew had such bold manners, considering the stock she sprang from; and Dick declared that it was very fine for his uncle to rail at him. He, at any rate, meant to settle and reform long before he was seventy. Poor Dick! he did not look much like living to seventy at present; and Lord Lovegoats persisted in railing. He had even refused to see his great-nephew during the last vacation—not having forgiven the young man's rejection of his church patronage; and Lady Margaret was at present meditating some scheme for concealing the fact (or at any rate the reason) of Dick's temporary retirement from the shades of Alma Mater.

I like Lady Margaret; but I do not think that nature had intended her for the head of a large family. Some women go very well in harness, and under a tight rein, and Lady Margaret was one of them. Had the Woods and Forests lived, she might have been looked up to on all sides as a model of an earl's daughter and an English matron.

She looked like the former now, as she stood before the fire talking with Bernard Clive. A handsome woman still, tall and well made, with wavy bronze hair, like Kate's, only streaked with gray, and crowned with a small point-lace cap always awry; with half an inch of embroidered petticoat visible at one side beneath the hem of her black velvet dress; and a huge rent in the costly lace shawl dragged anyhow round her shoulders, and fastened by a big diamond brooch, whose broken pin, besides making the ungainly tear, had scratched her throat in two places. A shockingly untidy woman, and yet a lady every inch of

her: nothing *bourgeoise*, nothing inconsistent with *une de nous autres*, as her friends would confess even while lamenting over her peculiarities.

"It is a little way of mamma's to throw on her clothes with a pitchfork, when I'm not by to look after her," Kate used to say, with a despairing little shrug of her shoulders; but all the same Kate admired her mother more than any other girls' mothers; and would have flared up in scorn and indignation, had any one dared to suggest that she might have been in any way altered for the better. Clive himself, surveying her with such small flash of his keen blue eyes as their lazy lids left uncovered—Clive, who called himself a man of the people, and talked in a radical way of "class humbugs" and "nature's nobility," recognized perfectly that the tall woman with the ill-made clothes, and the nervous hand rubbing imaginary flies off the end of her nose all the while she was talking to him, could not, under any circumstances, have stood behind a counter, dropped her "l's," or been "genteeel."

"Lady Margaret is a wonderfully handsome woman," he said to Dick when they were up stairs "polishing" for dinner. "That photograph you showed me gives one no idea of her."

"O, photos are generally awful sellers; and then my lady never will stand still, so it's no wonder she gets blurred," said Dick, carelessly. "I suppose she was good-looking once—something like Kate."

"Like your sister?" Clive said it inquisitorily, and rather as in disparagement of the latter. Perhaps he did not admire Kate. Dick fancied so, at least, and was rather disgusted. He had not spoken much of his sister to this great friend of his. Like the generality of young Englishmen, especially those who are not particularly select in their feminine acquaintances, he was extremely shy of alluding to his family before the men who knew him away from them. Dick was not domestic; he was not even particularly filial; but he had one soft corner in his heart for home, and Kate filled it. In his eyes she was just the one girl worth anything, the prettiest, best and nicest girl in the world. He was always worrying and often very unkind to Kate; but he believed in her, and felt a perfectly good and honest pride in the admiration she excited. That any one should not admire her seemed

to him rather incredible; and, thinking as highly of the new fellow of St. John's as he did, he had been secretly rather anxious for a larger share than usual of his admiration for the pet sister. The reality was disappointing.

"You know your way down, I think," he said, turning abruptly to the door. "I must go and speak to the girls;" and so went out. Kate was watching for him on the stairs, and was equally amused and surprised when he put his hands round her waist, and held her away for a long critical look, before giving vent to the energetic comment:

"You're a million times nicer than half the girls about, let 'em say what they like."

"Glad you think so," said Kate, laughing, and reaching up to kiss him. "You're not nice—not nice at all, for coming back in this way. I wonder my face hasn't got a netting pattern of wrinkles on it, with you! I tell you what it is, Dick, you'll be bringing my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave some day, if you—"

"Sorrow to the humbug!" interrupted Dick, curtly; "drop that, Kittle; I shall have enough in that line from my mother, without your striking in. Tell me instead—what do you think of Clive?"

"Of—of your friend?" said Kate, hanging her head, doubtfully. "Well—I have not seen much of him yet to—"

"To think much? I dare say not; but I suppose you have thought something. You can tell if you think you like him?"

"L—like him!" repeated Kate, still softly reluctant. "No, I don't think I—like him; I—you're sure you don't mind, Dick, do you, darling? but—but—I think him a prig: that's all: a stuck-up prig!"

"A-a-tchah!"

It was only a sneeze; but it came from the landing above them, on to which Mr. Bernard Clive had just stepped in his way down stairs.

### CHAPTER III.

#### KATE PUNISHES MR. CLIVE.

DINNER was on the table: a very pretty little dinner—very prettily laid for eight; and in my opinion eight is just the right number for a cosy dinner-party, just big enough for particular conversations, and not too big for general sociability. Mr.

Marryatt—a bald man with a long fat body, short fat legs, and a slow fat voice, which, Madge said, sounded as though he were giving you an unctuous pat between each word—took down Lady Margaret; and made blandly ponderous allusions to "our departed friend" (meaning the Woods and Forests) between every other sentence. Dick, as head of the house, took care of Mrs. Marryatt, a smallish pallid woman, with a head suggestive of one of those skulls which the Greeks used to crown with flowers, and set on the dinner-table as a sort of mortuary warning; and a manner habitually depressed from a concatenation of mysterious ailments, the nature of which no doctor had been able to discover.

Mr. Philpots, the junior curate of St. Mark's—a young man so dreadfully in-love with Kate that he grew pink and damp all over with excitement if she even looked at him—paired off with Miss Fothergill, a gushing young lady of thirty or thereabouts; and—Kate was left to Clive!

Lady Margaret had arranged all that beforehand; and of course it was the right and proper thing; but, under the circumstances, Kate was not happy in the conjunction. Even her power of conversation had deserted her; and Clive did not help her. Indeed, he made so little use of his tongue, that Kate could not help suspecting that his ears were sharper than she had thought, when she stoutly declared to Dick that it was utterly impossible he could have heard her most unluckily worded opinion.

It was pleasant to see Dick's fair head at the bottom of the table again, even though, being displeased at her comment on his friend's manner, he did not vouchsafe to look in her direction. The flowers, too, which she had arranged for the table, looked very pretty as the gaslight fell on snowy arums glimmering out from dark emerald-fronded ferns, and dainty white and rose-colored cyclamen nodding their delicate fairy-like heads over beds of starry primula; and the dark shining leaves of bay and laurestinus. The massive silver on the side-board, the crimson and gold-patterned china, the fire crackling cheerily in its frame of white and blue Dutch tiles, all made up a picture warm and bright in coloring. Even the street noises sounded dull and subdued through the heavy tapestry curtains, their once gorgeous hues toned down by age and smoke to a subdued tint of dusky richness.

Lady Margaret was smiling and chatting to her neighbor, and making occasional onslaughts on the imaginary fly at one and the same time. Mrs. Marryatt was trying to find out why Dick had returned from college in the middle of the Lent Term; and Dick was trying to foil her by pretending a great interest in the state of her health. Mr. Philpots and Miss Fothergill were whispering—or rather Miss Fothergill was whispering (some young ladies always will; it has a sweet confidential air)—and Mr. Philpots was staring at Kate, and wondering who the tall ugly man, with the eyeglass and the supercilious mouth, could be. A stranger certainly, and not a talkative one, for he hardly spoke to Kate; but that only proved him the more in love with her, according to the Rev. Herbert Philpots.

In that young man's eyes, no one could look at Miss Bellew without falling in love with her. He was surrounded by a legion of imaginary rivals, each of whom appeared to him, for the time being, as the one and only obstacle in the way of his own love; and yet I very much doubt whether, if Kate and he had been shut up alone in a desert island for a dozen years, he would have ever found courage to hint at the warmth of his feelings to the young lady then sitting opposite to him, her bright round eyes turned fondly on that scapegrace Dick, and her pretty round arms, with the bewitching little dimples at wrist and elbow, just visible through a break in the screen of leaves and flowers between them. Somehow, and despite Miss Fothergill's prattling, the Rev. Herbert found himself engaged in metaphysical communings as to the wide difference between things called by the same name—as, for instance, elbows and wrists.

Given an elbow, or wrist, thought the curate, and every one fancies that he understands one and the same object as signified by that title; but show an elbow or a wrist—glance at that soft, creamy, dimpled arm of Kate's, and then turn to the red and “goosey” hook imperfectly concealed by Miss Fothergill's short lace sleeves, and the red and shiny knob not at all concealed by Miss Fothergill's jingling bracelets—and would any one dare pronounce that two substantives so utterly different could or should come under the same definition?

Poor Miss Fothergill! It was not her fault that she was thin—painfully thin. She did her best, and tried to make up for

the scarcity of flesh and blood by showing a liberal display of bone. Her pink silk dress was *decolletée*—very much so; and yet there was no shadow of impropriety in it! It might have been more *decolletée* yet without even calling a frown to the rigid brow of Mrs. General de Ponsonby, or reminding the most imaginative of aught beside those attenuated savages at the entrance to the Crystal Palace nave. You looked at her and you felt pity—pity and a great desire to cover those poor shivering shoulder-blades with something warmer than the slight raiment of violet-powder; traces of which were visible on Mr. Philpots's right sleeve and shoulder, thus as it were (in the language of South American sheep-farmers) marking him as pertaining to the Fothergill fold.

He was aware of the premature seal of proprietorship himself, and fancying (of course) that every one at table was equally interested in the fact, hated Miss Fothergill with a hatred which was basely ungrateful; for she was doing her very best to amuse him, chattering away at the top of her high vivacious voice, with little *staccato* notes of exclamation, and shrill interludes of youthful laughter bubbling up, as it were, from the very overflowing of her joyous nature.

“I went to the florist's about the Easter decorations,” she was saying, leaning over the hapless Herbert, and writing fresh testimonies on his broadcloth with the hook aforementioned. “You told mamma that you wanted to have all the details arranged a good while beforehand, this year; so I went at once; and—O, fancy!—I walked all the way alone! It was in the afternoon too; and mamma was quite shocked. She said, ‘Flora I can't allow it. Suppose some rude man was to speak to you?’ and indeed I did feel a little nervous; but I knew no one has flowers like Luckings, and I put on a thick thick veil—O, I don't think even you would have known me—but just fancy being seen alone, and nearly a mile! and people do say such things if a girl is at all—you know—*independent*; but indeed I almost ran all the way; and you don't think it was fast of me, Mr. Philpots, do you? I held my parasol close in front of my face, you know, when any one looked at all—at all particularly, you know. Kate!” (catching Miss Bellew's eye, and leaning more forward still in juvenile eagerness) “Did you hear of my going all the way to Luckings' alone on Friday? I would have called for you, only

I knew you would be out; and now I am afraid Mr. Philpots thinks me a dreadfully wild thing for—”

“Wild!” repeated Kate, opening her brown eyes wide; “bless me, I hope Mr. Philpots couldn’t be so silly! What earthly wildness is there in going to the florist?”

“Only—alone, you know,” said Miss Fothergill, a little quenched; “and in the afternoon when there are so many people—men, you know—about.”

“Well, but the men don’t hurt us, do they?” asked Kate, with unsympathetic bluntness.

“O my dear Kate, you are so funny; but every one knows what strange men are; so very—very—”

“Wild?” suggested Clive, suddenly, and with extreme demureness. “H’m—very strange indeed. I thought they were pretty civilized in these parts.”

“Miss Fothergill means common men, of course,” said the Rev. Herbert, in mild explanation. “One does meet rough specimens everywhere occasionally; and I have heard of their speaking to ladies now and then, at least when they were young and—ahem!—pretty.”

“People always hear of those sort of things,” said Kate, demolishing the curate with the first note of her clear audacious voice; “but I don’t believe in them. I know I go everywhere alone, if it happens to be necessary, and no one ever yet spoke to me.”

“Mr. Philpots only alluded to that danger in connection with young and pretty people. It was not a general statement, Miss Believe,” put in Clive with the same demure languor as before.

The Rev. Herbert flushed scarlet. Did this insolent barrister mean to insinuate that his adorable neighbor was neither young nor lovely? Indignation choked him; and luckily, before he had recovered sufficiently for speech, the butler touched his arm with “‘Ock, sir?’” and Miss Fothergill rushed again into the van. She was not irate, not at all. Kate had in a manner snubbed her, and the stranger—who had probably fallen in love with her across the table—was returning cut for cut.

“Perhaps I am unfortunate,” she said with a little simper. “Of course I never go out unchaperoned in general (so funny of you, dear Kate, to do such things!) but even with mamma, people have stared or

been unpleasant. I remember one day I was stepping out of the carriage at Swan & Edgar’s—I wore my hair in curls then, and I suppose it was rather thick and noticeable; but what can you do to hide it? I’m sure I often wish I had none—and two men who were passing stared so unpleasantly, and said something about a ‘pair of tongs.’ So rude! I was quite frightened; and as it happens, you know”—with a little laugh—“I never use tongs. All our hair, the Fothergill hair, curls quite naturally.”

“I wonder if I might rush out into the hall for a moment,” said Clive to his plate, and in the very lowest of whispers.

“The hall!” repeated Kate the quick-eared, staring.

“O, of course it is a wild desire, but I should like to scream. However, I suppose the butler wouldn’t approve.”

“Do not be absurd,” said Kate, rebuking but confidential. “I don’t suppose she did understand what they meant, or she wouldn’t have said it.”

“You understand perfectly, I see, but I suppose you are a believer in your sex’s simplicity. No, thank you” (to the servant with cream-tarts).

“No; I think most of us are great humbugs generally. We have to be; but then we humbug ourselves more than we do other people.”

“And you believe your friend has humbugged herself—I use your own expression, so make no apologies—into fancying that she could not walk alone in Bayswater?”

“Why not? And what is the matter with the expression?”

“Nothing; it is both forcible and lucid; though, in this case, I rather doubt its correctness. I am not so sure that Miss Fothergill would be safe—from all classes.”

“What, tipsy men? O, but one meets them so seldom, and—”

“I beg your pardon, I don’t mean tipsy men.”

“Who then?”

“Anatomical students.”

“Mr. Clive, I don’t allow these sort of remarks. Flora is my friend.”

“Exactly, or I shouldn’t have followed your lead in making game of her.”

Kate was speechless with indignation.

“But I thought you were going up for your ‘little go,’ Mr. Dick,” said Mrs. Marryatt. “Have you passed it? because, if so, I ought to congratulate you.”

"Passed it?" said Dick, hurriedly. "O dear! no. Let me give you some port. Burbage! port this way."

"No, certainly not, Mr. Dick, thank you. I have been taking claret. You know we were so surprised to hear you would be in town all the spring. Kate mentioned it to our Bessie; but I said impossible, for I know dear Lady Margaret was so anxious that—"

"But you are drinking nothing, Mrs. Marryatt; and this claret is such washy stuff. You ought to take that new Greek wine—what's its name?—that doctors are always crying up. Hasn't yours recommended it to you? You have Sir James, haven't you?"

"Not now. O dear! no; I was obliged to change; he took no interest, none at all"—and Mrs. Marryatt forgot college matters in the pathos of her own woes—"never even cared to find out what was the matter with me; and so utterly unsympathetic that—"

"But, my dear Lady Margaret," said Mr. Marryatt, ponderously, "surely it is time he should choose a profession. Our departed friend, I know, thought with me that a young man cannot begin to consider his way of life too early; and if he were to go into the church—"

"But he won't. That is just what he won't," interrupted Lady Margaret, always ready to pour out her grievances to any friendly ear. "And Lord Lovegoats will never forgive it. Such a nice living, Mr. Marryatt! a little damp perhaps; but such a sweet quiet living, with no temptations—positively no temptations to—to do anything! I went on my knees to my uncle to get him to keep it for Tom; but he declares he will sell it. Is it not enough to break my heart?"

"Most distressing, indeed. The irrational perversity of the junior male sex of this era is a thing to be deplored by all right-minded—"

"Do you think a cross of white violets and ivy would look well?" murmured Miss Fothergill in the curate's ear. "O, no more grapes, please!—Kate said primroses in moss; but if you think violets—"

"O no, Mr. Marryatt," said Kate, "valentines are not only for silly young ladies. You should see our Dottie's delight in hers. I sent it to her; and she came dancing on to my bed in the morning, holding it out,

with 'See what a gentleman's diven me' as triumphantly as a girl of sixteen over her first offer."

"Kate!" cried Dick across the table, "do you know what part of Syria the Amalekites came from?"

"No," said Kate, laughing. I'll ask mamma. Mamma"—raising her voice. And then Lady Margaret looked up with a startled smile, and gave the signal for rising. No one but Dick knew that Kate had given it first, and by his suggestion. These young Belles had a perfect code of secret signs and counter-signs; and Lady Margaret was rather prone to spinning out dessert when she was on her family hobby-horse.

Kate had not spoken to Clive since he made the remark last recorded; nor did she look at him when he held the door open for her exit. He made no remark either; but he smiled slightly as she passed out with head erect and eyes studiously averted. It was not a disagreeable smile; rather that of a man pleasantly amused by the mischievous caprices of a frolicsome kitten. Kate, however, thought much more seriously of his unjustifiable retort. When the gentlemen came up stairs, she called Mr. Philipps to her at once, raising that young man to the seventh heaven by so doing; and then dashed him down again by dismissing him with a few bright words to turn over the leaves of Miss Fothergill's music.

"You have such a correct eye. No one turns over so beautifully," Kate said with one of her sweetest smiles, as she slipped away and flung herself into an argument going on between Dick and Mr. Marryatt, privately hoping the while that Clive would feel himself in disgrace, and recognize his punishment. "He wants a lesson," she said to herself.

He may have wanted it, but he did not appear to suffer from it, or even consider himself in punishment at all. On the contrary, after a word or two of a merry sort with Lady Margaret, he strolled away to the sofa-table, where Eve and Madge, in white muslin frocks with blue sashes, and George, with a clean collar so preternaturally stiffened that it had cut a deep line in his fat cheeks, were amusing themselves with drawing-room propriety. I am afraid Clive broke up the propriety when he joined the group. At any rate, Kate heard great bursts of most unconventionally riotous laughter wafted to her over Mr. Marryatt's

prosing; and saw Eve's pale little face glowing quite brightly, while Madge's impetuous voice asked:

" Didn't you think there were so many of us?"

" I fancy I thought there were more."

" Why?"

" From certain sounds proceeding from a room down stairs when we arrived this evening."

" Ah, George, I told you what a noise you were making," said Eve, in a grown-up little voice, as anxious to show that she was not among the noisy ones.

" It was Madge too," growled George, " and Kate, and Dottie. You needn't talk as if it were all me."

" I assure you," said Clive, politely, " such a wild idea never crossed my mind. I only wondered not to see you at the table."

" There was not room," said Eve, quietly, " so I dined with the children in the schoolroom."

" But you always dine in the schoolroom when there is company, whether there is room or not," put in George, crushingly, " and you are a child too. You've not come out yet, and people are always children till they come out. Kate says so. Kate is nineteen, Mr. Clive, and I'm nine, and Eve—"

" Yes, Kate wishes it," said Eve, a little angrily, but always soft-voiced and dove-like: " One grown-up daughter is enough, you know. When Kate is married I shall come out; and, besides, our dining-room is too small. It is tiny."

" But it is not the *real* dining-room. It is the schoolroom," cried George, thrusting in his ear again with unnecessary candor. We use the real dining-room for our lessons and play. Miss Smith is there now. You can go down and see her, if you like. Mama said she would rather use the little one, because then no one could expect her to give dinners."

" Don't you think you are fatiguing yourself with talking?" said Clive. " Your voice is very powerful, but I think it must want a rest. Suppose you give it one."

" I don't know what you mean," said George, staring. " Are you a doctor? I thought you were a lawyer. I'm going to be a lawyer some day. Burbage told Jane that they were all a set of thieves, but I don't think he knows. He told me—"

" Why, Clive," cried Dick, coming up to the sofa-table, " fancy these brats getting

hold of you. Eve, what a color you've got!" And then the chatter and fun grew noisier, till it attracted Mr. Philipps and Miss Fothergill, and only poor Kate was compelled to go on talking, or rather listening, to Mr. Marryatt, as he waded on and on in a sea of argument about something in which she took no manner of interest whatsoever.

A request for a "little music" released her at last, but Mr. Marryatt followed her with officious courtesy, and all through her song she could hear the ripple of mirth, only a little subdued, from the other end of the room. She did not miss one voice, or guess that the antagonist who had spoilt her evening was sitting apart from the rest, drinking in each note of the pure sweet contralto, which trembled with such pathetic melody over one of those exquisitely simple, tear-compelling ballads of one of our sweetest English composers. She had forgotten Clive just as he remembered her. Only those who love to sing, sing well or lovably, and Kate's heart was in her song. There was a mist over Clive's keen blue eyes as she finished, and he started when Miss Fothergill spoke to him.

" Don't you admire Miss Bellew's voice, Mr. Clive? People generally think it exceedingly fine—a *little* weak in the high notes perhaps, don't you think?—but very touching. M— taught her, you know. Do you like his style?"

" I really can hardly tell you," Clive said. " I scarcely thought about it. The song was perfect."

" But you didn't care about the singing? O Mr. Clive, I am surprised. Kate, I find. Mr. Clive is a terribly severe musical critic. I shall not try my poor little voice before him."

After that, Kate "punished" Clive by singing two more songs, and Clive enjoyed them heartily, and at going to bed thanked her for the very pleasant evening he had spent.

But Kate was not satisfied with herself. She had spoken hastily of a stranger, using an unbecoming phrase in so doing, and he had overheard her, which of itself was enough to disturb her; and then she had rather snubbed her friend at her own table, and been surprised and offended at the stranger taking up her cue, and telling her in so many words that she was to blame for it. Now, she acknowledged that she had been to blame, and could not be satisfied till

she had gone into her mother's room and made confession. Poor little Kate! She was always making mistakes from not staying to think before she spoke. She was just as quick at acknowledging the mistakes, it is true, and making atonement; but is there not a proverb about "shutting the stable door?"

## CHAPTER IV.

### MRS. SPINKS'S LODGER.

IT was the quietest little row of houses imaginable—one of those rows of brand-new suburban cottages, built of yellow brick picked out with white, with a flight of three steps up to the front door of each, a bow-window much like a good-sized bird cage in the front; and a square of dirt or grass about the dimensions of a table-cover in front of that. A row of houses, each of which displays the identical little round table flanked by a ricketty chair on either side, and crowned by a crochet cover, and a vase of highly unnatural wax fruit, under a glass shade, in every aforesaid bow-window along the line; the whole shaded by ragged-looking netted curtains from within, and pots of dusty withered plants, original nature unknown, without—houses which sprout forth every here and there into a card with "Furnished Bedroom," or a brass plate with the title, "J. Le Feuvre, Prof. Dancing," or "Miss Binks, Court Dressmaker and Milliner," engraved on it. Not aristocratic houses, though. Not an aristocratic neighborhood—dull, far away from everywhere, badly lit, semi-paved, with other rows of half-built houses beyond, and visions of damp stagnant meadows and intersecting railway arches in the background—a place to make you depressed as you skim past it in a railway carriage, *en route* for Clapham or the Crystal Palace—a place swarming with sickly agueish children; lively with blue-mould and black beetles; and made dangerous by a gas works standing precisely in the centre of the deepest and blackest quagmire, in the dampest and damnest of the outlying slums in the neighborhood.

Even Mrs. Spinks, standing on her front doorstep, with the red light of the setting sun in her eyes, and making little green and purple circles in the chilly spring atmosphere around her, yawned drearily, and

drew mental contrasts between "these 'ere raw new places, and the old three-pair-back in the city. Of course it were nicer to 'ave a 'ouse of your own an' let lodgin's, than live in hother folks 'ouses, an' only be a lodger yourself; but, all the same, it weren't lively when you've lived in a bustlin' part, with nice sociable folk about you, to come out to a gashly 'ole like this. Certingly the school was handy, and she wouldn't ha' known wot to do without it for her boys, as 'ad ought to be in afore now, an' 'ad their teas afore the lodger come 'ome an' wanted hers, which 'ere she were, *a-comin'* up the street now, and perhaps 'er fire out—who knows? Not that she's a fault-findin' one, or, for the matter o' that, one to talk much about anythink."

She did not look like a talker—not, at any rate, like one who would have wasted much conversation on Mrs. Spinks; a tall woman with a beautiful upright figure, and the face of a queen—calmly proud and coldly fair. Plain as were her black dress and mantle—plain almost to meagreness—they fell about her with something of the grace of a regal vesture; and her step was as firm, her graceful head as lofty, as though she had just walked down from a throne for familiar intercourse with her subjects.

There are some people who seem, as it were, born to the purple. Mrs. Spinks's lodger was one of them.

She looked tired, too, this poor queen—obliged to rent a humble pair of rooms at No. 2 Alma Terrace—tired and disappointed, with a pale shadow about the broad brow and quiet resolute mouth. Even Mrs. Spinks noticed it, and as she moved aside for the convenience of her lodger's ingress, said sympathetically:

"Good-evenin', m'm. You do look rarely beat, to be sure."

"I am a little tired—thank you"—spoken in a low rich tone, which yet told of more than bodily fatigue.

"An' I'll be glad of a good cup of tea, I dare say, m'm. I'll have it ready for you dreckly. The kettle 'ave been billin' this hour or more, an' I were just a-lookin' out for they two limbs o' mischief o' mine, which they'd ought to ha' been 'ome these twenty minutes. An' what'll you take with your tea, m'm?"

"Nothing, thank you, except a piece of toast."

"Which there is not a very clear fire in

the kitchen for that, m'm, an' I wont deceive you; but the kettle it biled over, and rouked up all the ashes, besides of blackin' the coals."

"Never mind, then; I can do it in the parlor," said the lodger resignedly, as, untying her bonnet-strings, she sat down with the heavy air of one too weary to care for anything but rest. Mrs. Spinks stared at her curiously.

"You do look beat, m'm. Wont you 'ave nothink more than the toast? I'd bile you a hegg in no time; or couldn't you fancy a snack of bacon, now? It 'ud do you good, for you don't look as if you 'ad no dinner to speak on."

"I was too busy to take any; but I would rather have nothing but tea, thank you, Mrs. Spinks." And then she got up to avoid any more talking, and went into the inner room.

Mrs. Spinks poked the fire, made it smoke, and departed rather irritably.

"This is the fourth day as she've been hout from mornin' to sundown, an' 'alf dead, an' never says a word of where she's been or nothin' to nobody," the good woman said to her husband, who was smoking his pipe in the kitchen.

"Don't she pay you your rent reg'lar?"

"She do that, Spinks, which I wont deny."

"Or are she all 'ung about with mock jools; or are she dressed like the decent widder body she calls 'erself?"

"Which I 'ave not seen a jool about 'er yet, mock nor real," murmured Mrs. Spinks.

"No, nor you aint no call to see wot aren't theer."

"Well, Spinks, an' did I say as I 'ad?" remonstrated Mrs. Spinks, in a slightly aggravated tone, as she tilted the kettle forward with a view to pouring some of its contents into the teapot. "I'm sure as I've never said nothink agin 'er, except as she is not like other women, but a deal stiffer an' closer, an' that I'll stick to."

"A deal less talk, you mean, an' a good job too," growled Mr. Spinks. "Now, then!" (as two red-headed, out-of-elbowed urchins tumbled pell-mell into the kitchen, kicking each other's shins, and shouting at the top of their voices)—"ow's a man to smoke 'is pipe in peace with a kipple of scamps like you a-rearin' an' a-tearin' round 'im like a kipple o' wild 'osse?"

"An' upsettin' of the lodger's tea!" cried

Mrs. Spinks, pouncing on the new-comers, and administering the threatened "clouting" with a vigor which was partially attributable to the fact that the tea spilt was that "first cup," which landladies consider their rightful perquisite, out of the lodger's tea-pot.

That lady meanwhile was sitting over the small fire in her cheerless little drab-walled parlor, up stairs. The wind, which had risen since she came in, shook the crazy frame of the miniature bow-window, and made it creak and quiver as though it were about to part bodily from the rest of the house. Even the badly-starched netted curtains fluttered their dingy festoons; and now and then little puffs of smoke rushed out of the grate into the lodger's face, and would have brought water into her eyes—but that it was there already; and the long white fingers had hard ado to stem the bitter tide which strove to overflow their slender outposts, as, with head bowed almost to her knees, she gave way to the grief so long and sternly hidden.

It was not for long. A noisy clattering, and then a sort of jingling bump at the door, as though the tray had walked up stairs of itself and was kicking for admittance, announced Mrs. Spinks with the tea; and in one second the lady had dashed away her tears, drawn herself erect, and straightened the sober little widow's-cap which sat with such strange sad suitability on her waveless bands of golden hair.

When the landlady entered, her face was turned to the fire; and she appeared to be too languid, or too busy warming her hands to turn round.

"Why, if you aint hall in the dark, m'm!" cried the good woman. "I'd ought to ha' lighted the gas, oughtn't I? which I'll do it now; an' a nasty night it is, a blowin' one's 'ead hoff if one puts it houtsde fur 'alf a minute; an' 'ere's the toastin'-fork, m'm. You're sure as you wont 'ave a hegg now?"

"Quite sure, thank you. I shall want nothing more till I ring for the things to be taken away."

The lady spoke gently, but still kept her eyes on the fire; and Mrs. Spinks was huffed.

"Hif one's good enuff to be spoke to, one's good enough to be looked at," as she remarked to her husband after jerking the tray on to the table, and shutting the door with a bang suggestive of her bruised and mortified feelings.

The lodger did not perceive it. A slight shiver indeed passed over her shoulders at the noisy closing of the door; but it was very slight, as of one used to such ebullitions; and then her head drooped upon her hands again. The gas had been lit, and flared up upon the low smoke-browned ceiling, and the drab walls patterned by a species of decayed cabbages, and enlivened by three pictures in black frames—one, a gorgeous print of a Scripture subject; another consisting of an oil painting so black with age, smoke and dirt, as to present no distinguishable object to the beholder save a pyramidal black mass, with a dirty round smear somewhere near the top, and just below it two grimy white patches, supposed to be a portrait intended to represent some worthy in gown and bands; and the third plain to see, being simply a family group of Spinks photographs cut out and pasted pyramidal in one common frame; a work of art doubtless most precious to the originals themselves; and useful even to strangers as conveying a warning, wherever else you went "to be taken," not to go to *that* photographer.

Over the fireplace was a mirror, two feet high by four wide, the once gilt frame obscured by soot-blacked green gauze, the surface wavy. Below it, upon the mantelpiece were tastefully disposed a couple of large mother-of-pearl shells, flanked by a white and blue china vase filled with spills at either corner; a pedestal supporting a plaster of Paris bust of Dickens under a glass shade in the centre. In the middle of the much-worn drapery, bought second-hand from the pawnbroker, stood the table, covered with a cheap brand-new cloth, in red and blue squares; facing the bow-window, a narrow horse-hair sofa, with the stuffing protruding in sundry places, and partly concealed by a ragged crochet anti-macassar; this in connection with half a dozen chairs more or less disabled, the little table aforementioned in the bow-window, and a lady's davenport in inlaid woods, strikingly out of keeping with the rest of the apartment, completing the furniture which Mrs. Spinks had brought into light by way of cheering her lady lodger.

The general result was—not successful!

There is no good in crying, however, when no one cares whether you do or not; neither is there any use in letting your tea get cold, when it is already so weak that it only requires to lose its heat to be positively un-

drinkable; and is the only meal you are likely to get for the next twelve hours.

And besides, in Mrs. Spinks's gas there was a cold glaring unsympathy, a tacitly chilling effect on the emotions, which the lady appeared to recognize. She had just dried her eyes again, and swallowed one cup of the lukewarm water miscalled tea, with a slice of the bread and butter which she had no heart to toast, when both she and the family in the basement were startled by a noise very unusual in those parts.

*Rat-a-tat-tat-tat-tat-TAT!*

"It were the fust time," and Mrs. Spinks said it advisedly, "the fust time as she'd ever 'eard sich a clatterin' at 'er door in all 'er born days; an' it brought the 'eart into 'er mouth, 't did. The lodger, she were used to 'givin' one o' they long shivery-shaky little knocks at the door, seemingly as if her wrists weren't strong enough for one good rap; but she never made a noise like this, nor yet comed a-dashin' an' clashin' up to the 'ouse in a 'ansom cab, a-frightenin' 'er so as she could 'ardly find breath to get to the door."

Nevertheless Mrs. Spinks did get to the door, severely snubbing the offers from both boys to fulfil that office for her; and being, indeed, devoured with curiosity to know what the person wanted who had put her nerves to such unseemly torture.

Her curiosity mounted tenfold when, on opening the portal, she found herself confronted by a tall gentleman in a light overcoat, whose voice had an awe-inspiring sharpness and authority as he asked:

"You have a lady lodger here, haven't you?"

"Certingly," said Mrs. Spinks, defiantly, "which I have no call to deny it; an' what may your pleasure be?"

"Be so kind as to give her my card, and say I hope she will excuse the lateness of my call."

He handed her the card as he spoke, and Mrs. Spinks received it dubiously between a grimy thumb and finger, and read the name on it with leisurely suspicion, before taking it in to her lodger with the brief announcement:

"A gentleman a-wantin' you, m'm."

"A gentleman?"

Curiosity mounted higher still before this white face and startled look. Without glancing at the card, the lady quickly added:

"Did he know my name?—ask for me by name, I mean?"

"He said, 'the lady as lodges with you, Mrs. Spinks, m'm,'" replied the landlady, severely, "which I'm free to confess also as he howned it were not a hour when he'd any right to be visitin' a lone woman."

The pale face flushed, and the proud lip twitched.

"Say I am not at home—not well enough to receive any visitors." She added the last half of the sentence after a startled glance at the name on the card; but it came too late. Tired of waiting on the step, the visitor had advanced further up the passage, and was now looking over the landlady's shoulder.

"Forgive my intrusion, Mrs. Grey," he said, taking off his hat, and showing a clever plain face, lit by a pair of wonderfully keen blue eyes. "It is horribly late; but surely you wont send me away, after I have come all these miles to see and shake hands with you again."

He moved Mrs. Spinks unceremoniously out of the opening as he spoke, and receiving no further rebuff, nodded cavalierly to that ill-used woman, and shut the door in her face.

"Which you may call it what you like, Spinks," cried the landlady as, after a vain attempt at hearing what was going on with-

in, she flounced down stairs red with indignation and stooping, "but remember as I warned you this very hevenin' as ever lived, Spinks. If you'll believe me, 'er face turned to the whiteness of hashes, an' she looked all for one as Martha Briggs did the day she was 'ad up fur not registerin' 'er baby, poor gurl!"

"P'raps he's 'er 'usbin," suggested Mr. Spinks, removing his pipe in the interest of the moment, "an' she've sloped acause of 'is beatin' 'er; an' he've been a lookin' arter 'er 'igh an' low to—"

"Pah!" broke in Mrs. Spinks, with lady-like scorn for the tame supposition. "Did I not 'ear 'im speak to her? and did he speak as a 'usbin does? Now, I ask you that, did he?"

"Not being theer, I aint free to say," said Mr. Spinks, putting his pipe into his mouth again, after a preliminary blow at the ashes, and with the air of one too used to being snubbed to resent it.

I agree with Mrs. Spinks. There was little of marital authority in the grave, kindly, almost affectionate tone of Bernard Clive's voice, as he took the widow's hand in his, saying, reproachfully:

"Mrs. Grey, why have you run away and hidden yourself from us like this?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

# ALL FOR FUN.

Fletcher, Ada L

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pg. 579

## ALL FOR FUN.

BY ADA L. FLETCHER.

SILENTLY, and in perfect order, the great company of three hundred girls filed into the seminary hall, not a whisper on the air, not a flutter of ribbons or a toss of curls, brown, black or golden. "Holyoke" girls are all drilled better than to indulge in any such follies. With eyes demurely fixed upon the work with which they were expected to occupy their fingers, while their minds were regaled with a flow of wisdom from the lips of the lady principal, they took their seats by sections, and the teachers passed on to their seats on the platform. Every variety of beauty and homeliness

is represented among these three hundred faces, bent over their embroidery and crochet, from the sober damsel of thirty summers, just finishing her long-delayed education, preparatory to going out next year as a missionary, to the dimple-cheeked girl of sixteen, just being initiated into the mysteries of seminary life.

But with only two of these are we directly interested, and they appear to interest the teacher more than the rest, also, judging from the many sharp glances sent in their direction. It is hard to tell why they are watched so closely, for there are not two

quieter girls in the room, just now. One, white and slender as a lily, with golden hair that will escape from the net that holds it, in a dozen little crinkles and curls about the high forehead; with eyes that we know must be dark, by the startling contrast of the black lashes that sweep the cheeks, is very intent upon her work, the shining needle flying through the meshes of thread, guided by fingers so dainty and white we know they are unused to labor rougher than that which now occupies them. This is Lily Stansfield, only daughter of a rich Vermont banker, with more money now in the little purse in her pocket than some of these hard-working New England girls have ever seen. She looks very innocent indeed at this moment, but the teachers are acquainted with her. Seated next her—a position gained only by much stratagem, and only on rare occasions—is a girl so small, so very youthful in appearance, one can hardly believe her to be the regulation age under which no pupil enters the seminary. But this is her second year, and she says she is almost seventeen. She cannot look innocent, though she may try ever so hard, with that rebellious head of brown curls standing, as she says, "seven ways for Sunday," the dark cheek upon which blooms a perpetual rose, and the saucy little mouth that wont stay shut and sober, but is forever breaking into smiles, scattering dimples right and left. The eyes we know must match the hair in color, though we can't see them just now. And this is Bessie Doane, youngest and petted daughter of Judge Doane, of Virginia. The two are roommates and fast friends, though of such opposite types of beauty, and "hailing," as the Western phrase is, from such widely separated sections. The teachers say it is the "affinity of mischief," and they ought to know, for sorely and often have their minds been vexed by their escapades.

Very soberly the lecture is heard through, subject this evening "General Deportment." Every one seems very attentive, but if Miss H—— were a little closer to her section she would see that Miss Lily's dark eyes, instead of resting on her work, are following very closely the movements of a little brown hand that lies on the bench between her and her roommate. Bessie is not deaf and dumb, but she has found the deaf and dumb alphabet very convenient more than once. This is what the busy fin-

gers said to the observant eyes: "Go down to the brook for your walk, and wait for me. I'm on the hash circle. Fun ahead."

Rather mysterious language to one not acquainted with seminary ways, but every former pupil will remember with an involuntary shiver the horror of what was called the "miscellaneous circle." To the unfortunate beings who never were seminary girls, we will explain that in that really excellent institution each of the girls was expected to do her share of the domestic work, and for this purpose the school was divided into *circles* for each branch of work. The miscellaneous circle did whatever was forgotten, or for want of time left undone—such as cutting up onions (O sisters, does it not make you weep to remember it?), picking meat off bones for hash, or making cod-fish-balls. Bessie used to say they placed her on this circle just because she turned up her aristocratic Virginian nose at the very thought of onions and codfish, but of course Bessie was mistaken.

Her message was finished just as the last words of the lecture fell on her ears, and she fell into line behind her roommate, as if there were no mischief plotting under the brown curls, or lurking in the brown eyes. No word could be spoken in the spaceway, but down stairs in the great domestic hall how the freed tongues flew! A flock of martins or blackbirds could not have chattered worse. And loudest, merriest of them all was Bessie, shirking work as usual, flitting from place to place, unheeding the quiet remonstrances of the senior who led the circle, until called back by the sharp command of the matron. When the fifteen minutes of evening work were over, how fast the little feet flew down the walk towards the brook, not yet ice-bound, though the air is chilly enough to make the scarlet nubia she flings over her shoulders as she runs, comfortable as well as picturesque. Lily was there, as requested, and alone, seated on the root of a great elm, looking fairer than ever in her pretty blue and white shawl.

Bessie, too much out of breath at first to speak, stood looking at her for a few minutes, then dropped at her feet.

"Does the scent of the onion hang round me still, Lill?" she asks, plaintively; then energetically, "I'm not going to stand this long, Lillian! If they don't give me some other work to do pretty soon, I'll run off!

Bah! my hands are worse than any old darky's in the cabins at home"—holding up the offending members scornfully.

"Was that what you wanted me to come to the brook for, Bess?" said Lily. "If it is, I am going back, for a cold in the head is not very desirable."

"Of course it wasn't, goosie!" was the affectionate reply. "Onions will keep till we haven't anything else to talk about. What do you suppose our girl at the post-office had for me at noon? Why, just exactly what we have been wanting to see—a magazine! Isn't Frank good? I wrote to him, you know, to send me something contraband to read, and gave him Helen's address, as she said we might, and this is the result. We will have to hurry, for our hour is almost over."

Then the two heads, brown and golden, came close together, and for a few moments no sound is heard save the gentle flow of the brook, or the dropping of the dying autumn leaves. Then there is a cry from Bessie:

"O Lil, see here! an advertisement for a correspondence from two students in Dartmouth. What do you say?"

"You surely wouldn't answer an advertisement, Miss Doane?" drawled Lily, in such excellent mimicry of their section teacher, that Bessie's clear ringing laugh rang up to the treetops, and startled a late robin into song.

"Indeed I would, Miss Stansfield, and so will you. Anything to break this stupid monotony that is making us old before our time. I look for gray hairs on my temples every day. It will just be the nicest kind of fun, and we can't be found out, for we can have the letters directed to fictitious names, and Ellen can take them out. Don't frown so, Lilian!"

"You know," said Lilian, a little gravely, "I'm not very good or dignified, but I don't like the idea of sending our handwriting into the hands of young men of whom we know nothing—not even the names."

"O pshaw! what harm can it possibly do, Lil, if we do not write anything we are ashamed of? And of course we won't! Be a good girl, and agree, or I'll drown myself. This brook always tempts me in my gloomy hours."

"Your 'gloomy hours!'" said Lily, smiling at the girl as she stood close to the water, the scarlet nubia making a glowing

framework for the laughing gipsey face. "When do they come, Bessie? But do you remember, child, I have a brother in Dartmouth, and it never will do for me to write there. He will be sure to find it out."

"Well," said Bessie, picking up the book, "here is one—I declare, from the University of Virginia. I'd like to know who that is, I know most of the boys. Write to him, Lil. That's a darling!"

"Well, anything to please you."

"'And myself,' say also, Lil. But hark! that bell! And in five minutes more that front door will be closed, likewise those of the north and south wings, and we be left out in the cold! Now for a race!"

The four flying feet bounded up the steps just as the doorgirl was closing the door, and the fifteen minutes before supper were spent in "getting their breath," Bessie said, and smoothing the hair tossed out of seminary propriety by their rapid race.

Supper, one of the pleasant hours of seminary life, passed off as usual, but we sadly fear the thoughts of our two conspirators were anything but devotional as they knelt during prayer. Bessie had her first letter to her unknown correspondent in her imagination before they arose, and Lilian, who had not altogether escaped the rigid New England ideas of duty, was busy debating whether she would write at all or not. But that she yielded to Bessie's arguments was clearly proven during the "silent study hours" that followed the evening repast; for instead of poring over Latin and algebra, as they should be, to the horror of their conscientious senior roommates, they employ themselves in writing, much to their own satisfaction.

But the two letters then and there indited never passed through the hands of "Cerberus," as these wicked girls call the teacher who guides and guards them. They are taken out on their next evening walk, and left with Ellen at the post-office. Two weeks later, Bessie, forgetting the stringent rule about "running up and down stairs," comes up the four flights two steps at a time, her eyes bright with excitement, but pauses abruptly at the door as she sees "Cerberus" herself there, talking pleasantly to her roommates. She thinks how good it is that the two letters she has just received are safe in the depths of her pocket, then comes soberly in and seats herself, answering gravely all questions of the visitor, and rising respectfully when she leaves the room. But when

she is fairly gone, taking with her their elder roommate, all rules are forgotten as the two bend over their letters. According to promise, each reads the missive of the other, and there is a startled look in Bessie's eyes as she glances at the handwriting of Lilian's correspondent, who signs himself "Harry Vaughn," but it is quickly hidden as Lily turns toward her, and an amused smile only lingers in her eyes and on her lip. If she had been watching Lilian more closely, she would have seen a seeming reflection of her own surprise and after-amusement in her friend's expressive face. But neither is any the wiser for the little byplay. The letters are both well-written intelligent productions, not in the least presumptuous, and in spite of Lilian's little doubtful qualms of conscience, the correspondence goes on through all the long weary weeks of that winter term, increasing in interest with each letter, as each learns more of the character of the other. Altogether, it is very pleasant—a spice, Bessie says, in "the otherwise flat and tasteless dish of their daily life." She grows to like her unknown friend "Herbert Lee" exceedingly, and letters fly back and forth with pleasant swiftness.

But suddenly there is a check to all their pleasure. One day, as Bessie is coming up from the basement, with her great kitchen apron on, and her sleeves not yet rolled down over the dimpled brown arms, she is arrested by Miss H—'s errand girl, who delivers the alarming message that has made so many girlish hearts tremble—"You are wanted in the south wing parlor, Miss Doane." There is only time to whisper a word to Lilian as she tosses her apron into the closet, and she rolls down her sleeves as she goes. What it is she cannot imagine, but she is not afraid, not seeing how anything could be found out. She turns the doorknob steadily in answer to the word "Come," but the next moment is sobbing and crying in her father's arms, hugging him closely, as if afraid he will get away; while Miss H— stands by with a pleased look in her eyes. Bessie did not know how homesick and forlorn she had been until she feels her father's arms about her, and his tender kisses on his baby's face. The judge is a very loving and indulgent parent, and his little daughter has never known what it was to yield in anything until since she has been within these walls. It has been good discipline for her, her father feels, as he

sees in the few days of his visit how much more gentle and womanly she has grown. He is delighted with the order and management of the school, and very much charmed with Lilian Stansfield, his daughter's especial friend. His daughter is rather inquisitive as to his reasons for so sudden a visit, but not until he is about to leave does he explain. "I came to put a stop to this, my child," he says, handing her a letter she recognizes in an instant as her last letter to "Herbert Lee!" She comprehends it all, flushing vividly as she does so—how she was writing to her father and Herbert on the same day, and must have enclosed the wrong missive to both. She confesses tearfully, and is forgiven, but with the stern injunction that the correspondence must cease immediately. "It is a very foolish and very dangerous game, little girl," he said; "and you will thank me sometime for putting my veto on it. Even if you were out of school, I could not allow it, and here it cannot be." When he is gone Bessie flies to Lilian, and the two weep together over their mutual delinquencies, but there is evidently something on the mind of each that is not revealed to the other. Lilian is more unforgiving toward herself than Bessie is, and will not even write an explanatory letter to her friend, as he has really grown to be. But Bessie, when her letter to her father is returned to her, writes a long letter in answer, telling Herbert not to write again, and closing with the saucy advice not to beguile any more innocent schoolgirls from the "stony and thorny paths of wisdom;" and this, she thinks, with a sigh, is the end of her little romance.

They go back to their books with a stern resolution not again to wander from them; and if their thoughts do roam very often toward their whilom correspondents, nobody is any the wiser. Bessie and Lilian are Bessie and Lilian still, but there is nevertheless a change in them which the teachers see and appreciate, without knowing the cause. Lightly and all too quickly the years of their school life flit by, and we shall see them again on their graduation day.

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"Lilian," said Bessie, turning gravely from the mirror—or the excuse for one that adorns each seminary room—"I always thought, in my foolish junior days, that my last anniversary would be my happiest; but instead, I am actually 'blue,' and feel like

shedding tears, even over this poor little looking-glass. I like the old 'Sem,' after all."

"Do you know what I am thinking about, Bess?" asked Lillian, rather abruptly. "I found an old letter in my trunk, in packing it last night, signed 'Harry Vaughn,' and I have been thinking about them ever-since. What do you suppose ever became of them?"

"Really, my darling, I can't say; and I am much more interested in the way this sash is tied than in either of them," laughed Bessie, though with rather a suspicious flush on her cheek; "and I want Elsie Moore to forget all about Harry Vaughn, and Lillian Stansfield to think about Frank Doane, who is already in the village, and has had a devouring curiosity to see my 'airy fairy Lillian,' ever since the judge's glowing description two years ago."

"I wish Oscar could have been here also," said Lily, with a sigh. "I'll wager you would forget all about your Herbert. At least, I mean that you shall like him when you meet him in the cool shades of the White Mountains this summer. How good it was of your father, Bessie, to let you go home with me, first, and then join our party to the mountains."

"Well, you see," said Bessie, linking her arm in her friend's, as the bell sent its clangor through the halls calling them for the last time as pupils to the assembly hall, "he thinks his little girl's cheeks have grown rather pale during the last few months, and thinks New England air will brighten them. Come, darling, that is our bell!"

For a moment they stood silently in the doorway, looking back with eyes that were a little dim upon the humbly furnished little room, from which two fairer brighter birds had never flown. With their flowing robes of cool white muslin, and fluttering ribbons all of the snowy white emblematic of their spotless girlhood, the only jewelry the blazing golden star upon their foreheads, the badge of their class, they made a picture worth looking at. And if two of them were so pretty, how overwhelming were the forty-five grouped upon the rostrum that evening to receive their diplomas from the hands of the venerable "D. D." who delivered the address!

Many hearts in the audience of young men fell swiftly captive, and that of Frank Doane among them. And as he went through the crowd to meet his sister he

thought—"Could there be anything more exquisite than the—angel—I can't call her a girl—who stood next Bessie. That must be Lillian Stansfield, according to the judge's description. But Lillian or not, my heart is gone." The next moment he was bowing low in acknowledgment of an introduction to this same "angel," and Bessie's warm "I want you two to like each other" was not needed. Alas for Harry Vaughn! He is quite forgotten.

There was a reception that evening, and a cold collation afterward, according to the time-honored custom of the institution, but Bessie might take care of herself for all Frank and Lillian seemed to care. Evidently the young lady didn't mind it very much, for of all the crowd none were merrier than she, and her smile was always brightest when she caught a glimpse of her recreant brother and friend.

The next morning early, the two girls left their Alma Mater behind them, taking the cars for Burlington. Then it was that Bessie exhibited a little petulance. "I never did like to be *number three* in a crowd," she said, viewing the empty half of her seat forlornly, and looking back at Frank and Lillian. "But it always has been, and I suppose always will be, my fate."

"Never mind, Bess," said Lillian, "Oscar will join us before we reach home, and that seat will not be vacant long. I shall scold him well when I see him. He was not coming home for a week, until I wrote that you were to be with me—then he proposed joining us on our way home."

"I shall be glad then," said Bessie, "to have somebody to speak to," with a withering glance at the two offenders.

The day passed off pleasantly enough, but toward noon Bessie, with whom late hours never did agree, grew tired and fell asleep with her cheek pillow'd on the cushioned arm of the seat. And thus she was presented to Oscar Stansfield's admiring eyes as he came through the car seeking his sister. Her hat had long ago fallen off and been placed by Frank in the rack above, the brown dishevelled curls fell over her arm and hand, and the long lashes lay lightly on the flushed cheek. She looked more like a tired child than a graduate of "one of our finest seminaries." Oscar placed his finger on his lip as Lillian recognized him, and grasped Frank's hand without waiting for the ceremony of introduction. Lillian would

have waked Bessie, but the spirit of mischief possessing Frank, he interfered.

"Take that seat, there, Stansfield," he said. "She's been wanting somebody there. Let her wake and find it filled."

Of course nothing could have pleased the young gentleman better, and so a few minutes later, when Bessie first opened her pretty mouth with a yawn, and the brown eyes crept sleepily open, they rested upon a pair of merry blue eyes, and a blonde mustache, beyond which a smile was lurking. Blushing till even the seashell ears grew crimson, she struggled to a sitting posture, and for a long while sat with her face to the window, in dignified displeasure, unheeding the bursts of merriment behind her, and only acknowledging Frank's formal introduction, by a distant little bow. But when, really mortified, Oscar rose to leave the seat, she turned toward him with a graceful request to remain, and in a few minutes they were chatting as amiably as the other two.

The little party only tarried long enough in the Stansfields' pleasant home to become thoroughly rested, and for the girls to prepare their mountain costumes. Then, O what a summer that was! To the birds who had been caged so long, every breath of freedom seemed enchantment. The roses in Bessie's cheeks bloomed out afresh, and even the snow of Lilian's cheek was tinged with pink. Throughout all the long bright summer days they rambled through the forest in search of new sights to be seen, and at evening gathered together in the piazza of the hotel, talked of all things under the sun, but most of all, we think, on the one subject that has never grown old, and never will grow old—that will be just as fresh and sweet a hundred years hence, as it was in the garden of Eden. "The old sweet story of loving." And when the cool evenings warned our southern friends that they must fly home with the birds, two rings gleamed on the first fingers of two little hands. Rings that had never shone there before, and were more precious to giver and receiver than all the diamonds of the Khedive of Egypt would have been, without the tender meaning these little gold bands possessed.

Alone in their rooms the evening before their departure, in schoolgirl fashion, the two girls whispered their happy secrets to

each other. But still there was something kept back—something that brought a merry gleam to each pair of eyes when the other was not looking. This will be most fully explained by the letter that reached Lilian a few weeks latter, and which we will give entire:

"O you wicked Lilian! whose every secret thought I thought I knew! How could you for so long deceive me so? But I suppose you will be asking the same question of me even as I write this. Never let any one dare to insinuate in my hearing again that a woman cannot keep a secret, for we are living instances, a proof that at least two women did and could keep a secret, and that from a most intimate friend. To think that at the very moment we received our first letters from Harry Vaughn and Herbert Lee, we each should recognize the handwriting of our own brothers, and still not whisper it to each other. That I should read all Frank's letters to you, and you read all of Oscar's to me, and still the secret remain inviolate! That all should have happened as it did—even through my father's visit and peremptory commands, and the years of silence that followed! Is it not wonderful? I will tell you how I found it out, and I suppose ere this you have discovered it in the same way. I never had seen any of Oscar's writing, of course, until his first letter after I came home. You know we always spoke of the peculiar style of Herbert's writing. In an instant I detected something familiar about Oscar's letter, and then it flashed over me that the two were identical even before I read the letter wherein the mischievous fellow made confession, and concluded by signing himself 'Yours as ever, Herbert Lee.' Of course I forgave him, and of course we must forgive each other for the only deception we have practised upon each other, since it has all been for the best. If it was commenced 'all for fun,' I am sure it has ended all for happiness. Frank wrote to you as soon as we reached home, so I know all is plain to you now. I was certain you would recognize his handwriting at once, for I thought you had seen some of his many letters to me, but when I found you didn't, then I kept them out of the way. I suppose you did the same. Well, Lil dear! 'all's well that ends well,' but it wont always do to answer advertisements in a magazine. I am not sorry, after all, that we did not go on with the correspondence. I suppose about Christmas will be the happy time, wont it, Lilian? And Frank will bring his fair bride down to see how Virginians keep the day, and I suppose Oscar will come with you, and—and—we'll have another wedding.

"Now, good-by. Write and let me know which you love the best, Harry Vaughn or Frank Doane?"

"As ever,

BESS."

# AN EXPERIMENT.

Dupee, Louise

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## AN EXPERIMENT.

BY LOUISE DUPREE.

ROSE and I were orphans, and lived with Uncle John in the little village of Shelburne. She was the village music teacher, and I taught the village school. We had our longings and aspirations, but still were tolerably contented. We were young enough to have our "some day" before us, rosy and wonderful, and it was pleasant in Shelburne. The streets were full of cool drooping elms. There were little rose-hedged lanes leading to pretty hidden cottages and farmhouses; old-fashioned flower gardens full of sweet scents; and bees, and brilliant colors, and all about it a paradise of green fields, and shadowy hills, and browsy woods. In winter, when the streets were ice and the pretty landscape dreary with snow, we had our firelight, and books, and dreams, after the day's work was done, and now and then a sleighride through the frosty star-lighted night. We had few companions, for the young people of the village were not just to our minds. The better class of the young men took flight to the city as soon as they were old enough to do so, and the girls either got married very young, and were swallowed up in housework, or, for want of something better to take up their minds, got to be very gossipy and meddlesome, and looked after the village generally, from the minister's family to the tin peddler's.

Rose and I were both young and strong, but we found our work rather wearisome. "If I were rich, I should never teach music any more," Rose used to say, sometimes, with a little sigh.

"And if I were rich, all the world might be counting their fingers and thumbs to find how much two and two is, before I'd teach them arithmetic," I would reply, energetically.

Then Rose would rebuke me gravely, that I had no desire to make myself useful; and we used to agree, that, after all, it was better for every one to be occupied, and consoled ourselves with the idea that the discipline we were undergoing now would help us to do something better by-and-by. So we went on with our piano lessons and vulgar fractions. We read our

books, took our walks, dreamed our dreams, and wondered about the world and people. Uncle John said that two such nice, smart, pretty, lady-like girls never existed, and I rather think we agreed with him in our own minds.

But one breezy bright-colored autumn day news came to Shelburne that changed our lives very suddenly. Our mother's brother, the only relative we had in the world, with the exception of Uncle John, who was an uncle on our father's side, had died in California, leaving all his large estate to us. We knew that there was such a person in existence, and that was all. We had never seen him. Long and long ago he sent mother his wedding-cards, and Aunt Mary kept them in the clove-basket on the parlor table now for ornament. If it hadn't been for seeing these once in a while we should never have thought of him, for he manifested no interest in us; and though he knew that we were left perfectly destitute when father died, and that Uncle John, who was a poor farmer, would be obliged to take care of us until we were old enough to do something for ourselves, he never even took the trouble to inquire after our welfare.

It was Saturday afternoon, and Rose and I were down in the meadow searching for fringed gentians, when Uncle John came running towards us, all out of breath.

"What is going to happen?" said Rose, actually turning pale. "I never saw Uncle John run before in all my life."

"Read the letter, girls!" the dear old man exclaimed, leaning against the fence to take breath. He looked almost wild with excitement, and the perspiration stood on his forehead in great drops.

"Read it aloud, Lou," said Rose, trembling.

I did so, and we wondered no more at Uncle John's excited state.

"Is the house afire?" gasped Rufus the hired man, hastening to the spot.

"No," said Uncle John, coolly, "but my girls has fallen heir to three or four hundred thousand dollars. What do you think of that, Rufus? That close California uncle

of their'n is dead, and as his wife and child is dead, and he didn't make no will, his money all goes to them."

Rufus stood transfixed to the spot, his axe held in midair.

"O uncle, what made you tell?" said Rose, pouting. "As soon as it is found out there wont be anything else talked of in the village."

"Lor, child, I couldn't help it, it's such amazin' news! Why shouldn't people know it?"

Rufus dropped his axe, and hurried away in the direction of the store. In that enchanted region he who has a wonderful story to tell is a hero for one day, at least; and Rufus, I was sure, intended to make the most of his opportunities.

"It is amazing news, truly," said I. "I should as soon have thought of finding the 'purse of Fortunatus' in this grass, as of receiving that letter." And I seized Uncle John by the neck, and kissed him until he gasped, then served Rose in the same way.

"Now we can repay you, partly, for all the care and trouble we have cost you, Uncle John," said Rose, beginning to sob.

But Uncle John declared that we had never been anything but a comfort to him, and as he had no children of his own, he didn't know what he should have done without us. Whereupon we all commenced to cry, and had a tearful time of it down there amid the frosty-looking asters and colored leaves.

"Why, how foolish we are," said I, recovering myself first. "Come, Rose, pick up your flowers, and let us go into the house. Don't lose the gentians; they are just as pretty now as ever."

After that Rose gave up her music lessons, and I gave up my school. The first thing we did after we came fairly into the possession of our wealth, was to make Uncle John the richest man in the place. Ah, wasn't it delightful to see him patronize the squire? And wasn't it still more delightful to see how soon he commenced to do little silent deeds of charity? He never had been able to do much for his fellow-men before, but he always had the kindest heart in the world. The old couple didn't alter their way of living much. Nothing would have induced them to leave that old weather-beaten farmhouse, to which they came on their wedding-day, fifty years before; and Uncle John would

not have exchanged his old feather-cushioned armchair for a king's throne. But they both agreed that they had done hard work enough. So a competent man was hired to take Uncle John's place in the care of the farm, and a stout girl to do the housework, which Aunt Mary had declared she enjoyed doing for so long. There was no more anxiety about that little mortgage on the old place, no more anxious forebodings of small crops, and no more pinching to make both ends meet. Uncle John's face had such a relieved, contented, thankful look, and Aunt Mary grew young again in her light-heartedness.

Rose and I were anxious to start at once for the city, only that it seemed heartless to leave our kind relations in their lonely old age. There was so much to be learned in the world, and we were so ignorant; so much to be enjoyed, and we were so young and restless; so much to see, and Shelburne was such a bare and narrow little place! Aunt Mary and Uncle John, however, both said, go. And when Aunt Mary had taken home Cousin Abby, a delightful but homeless old maid, who was obliged to go out sewing for a living, the most congenial companion she could have found the world over, and Uncle John had produced, with such an air of triumph as I never saw in his face before, his own particular crony, Captain Ryder, from the poorhouse, and announced that this was to be his home henceforth, we left them without any rebuke from our consciences. Captain Ryder was an old sea-captain, all alone in the world, and had been unable to work for long years. He and Uncle John were bosom friends, even in boyhood, and it almost broke Uncle John's heart when this friend was obliged to go to the town for support. He had always been trying to persuade him to come over to the farm, and allow him to take care of him, but Captain Ryder knew of the mortgage on the farm, and how hard it was for Uncle John to take care of his own family; so he always refused to do so until now. Now he knew that he should be no burden, that his presence would indeed be welcome.

"Never was such company as he is," said Uncle John, rubbing his hands with delight, after his crony was snugly ensconced in the cosiest corner of the hearthstone. "Now, girls, you can go and spend your money as fast and foolishly as you

please, without any fear of our being lonesome. Your aunt's got Abby, and I've got the cap'n. Not that we shan't miss you, but, of course, you'll come and make us a visit every little while."

Of course we should. As soon as ever summer came we should be back at the old homestead.

The only person we knew in the city was a widow lady, Mrs. Arey, who spent the summer in Shelburne two years before. She was very much out of health, and came there to seek it in our sweet invigorating air. She boarded at our next neighbor's, and Rose and I used to carry her flowers, and various little dainties which Aunt Mary was fond of concocting for sick people. She was very pleasant and gracious, and, as good fortune would have it, very fashionable. People said she was very rich. We could not tell as to that, but, at any rate, she lived in the world. She knew all about the opera, she went to parties, she talked learnedly about pictures, and she boarded at a first-class hotel. That was just what we wished to do, and so we wrote to her of our altered circumstances, and our desire to go to town for the winter. She replied in as gracious a manner as we could have desired, inviting us to come to her at once. She would be delighted to take us under her chaperonage.

In just one month from that memorable day in the meadows, we arrived in town, and took up our abode in one of the finest suite of rooms at the — House. In a short time we were so changed by laces, and silks, and velvets, that we hardly knew ourselves.

"O, were you ever that little drab school-teacher?" said Rose, with a look of utter amazement, as she regarded me in full evening dress, with train, and plumes, and pearls. "No, your features are different, even your eyes."

"And were you ever that little drab music teacher?" I echoed, giving her the full benefit of my extensive train. "How do you like it, Rose?"

"How do I like it? why, I think it is perfectly delightful so far!" said she; "don't you?"

"Yes," I said, rather hesitatingly, though, to Rose's surprise.

Mrs. Arey came in to inspect us with critical eyes, for this was our first party. She pronounced us very stylish after a few

little alterations, and an hour afterward we were in the midst of it—the party, I mean. Rose was already engaged in a flirtation with a very young man who had very handsome eyes, and who seemed to be immensely popular with the ladies. I opened my eyes at her, she knew how to do it so well. For my part, I found it required practice, and was answering the devoted young gentleman who persisted in keeping at my elbow to utter his delightful remarks, in rather an abstracted manner. Neither Rose nor I was as pretty as a good many other young ladies there, and I was conscious that we lacked that indescribable air which can only be acquired by a long acquaintance with fashionable society, and yet we received more attention than any one of them all. I couldn't imagine what it meant. It was not because we were new, as there were several other new young ladies present who were scarcely noticed at all. Rose is pretty, to be sure. She has the brownest, brightest eyes imaginable, a pretty rosebud mouth, a saucy nose; and though her complexion is somewhat brown, it is clear and soft. As for me, though I have a nice figure and a wealth of rich blonde hair, I do not think any one but Uncle John and Rose ever thought me pretty. My mouth is too large, and my eyes too wide open. But there were two or three really beautiful girls in the crowd that night. One of them I could hardly keep my eyes from. She was a blonde, with a brow of exquisite shape and expression. Her eyes were purple, not blue, and looked as if she were just ready to utter some happy thought. Then the contour of her little shell-tinted cheek and chin was so lovely, and she carried her shapely head like a queen.

"How very beautiful that young lady is—the one with the white dress and blue ornaments, I mean," I remarked to Mr. Thornton, who had taken me out to supper.

"Beautiful! do you think so? I have never thought her remarkably good-looking," said he, giving her a prolonged stare.

"I think she must be nice, too," I said. "I am going to ask Mrs. Arey to introduce me to her."

"I have not the honor of her acquaintance. She is Mrs. Hammond's governess, I believe," said my gentleman, with just a breath of scorn in his placid polite manner.

I grew in knowledge from that moment. What a whirl we lived in for the next two months! Rose was trying to take music lessons of the famous master Herr Schiller, and I had commenced to take lessons in painting of Carelton, the celebrated landscape painter; but we had scarcely a moment to devote to these lessons. Our life was all dressing, and dancing, and concerts, and visiting.

"It takes so much time to be fashionable," said Rose, with a sigh, as she left the piano and Schumann's lovely little Spring Song, to dress for a dinner party, one wintry March afternoon.

"Too much time," said I; "and I have made up my mind not to be fashionable any longer. Like Launcelot, I am sick of life, and love, and all things."

"And so am I, to tell the truth," said Rose, pushing back her hair, with a look of unutterable weariness. "Still, I like the city. If we only had a little quiet home of our own, Lou, where we could live, and not rush away our lives. I think it would be so nice. I'm so tired of all these people! They are all alike. They all say about the same things; they all seem to have just the same aims, and they look so tiresomely alike in their Paris dress. Let us take up our abode in a different part of the city, in some thoroughly respectable, but decidedly unfashionable quarter, and see what we shall find there. I am eager to know about every class of people. Did you know, Lou, I have been trying to find time to tell you that Charlie Vanderpool proposed to me?"

"Indeed! and what did you say to him?" I answered, coolly.

"I said, 'I do not love you,'" replied Rose. "What else could I have said? Mrs. Arey says that I am very foolish—that no girl in her senses would refuse to marry him, his family is so old, his position is so fine. Then he is so handsome and so fascinating. He is handsome, but I never liked a handsome man, and—O Lou, I wonder if you see things as I do? He isn't in love with me—at least, I don't think he is."

"I cannot say as to that," said I; "but I am glad you are not going to marry him. Do you know, Rose, I've been trying to find time to tell you that Mr. Thornton has proposed to me?"

"Indeed?" said Rose, imitating my tone perfectly. "And what did you say to him?"

"I said no. What else should I have said to him? Mrs. Arey disapproves of me exceedingly. She says that no young woman in possession of her sensibilities would refuse to marry him, his family is so aristocratic, and his position is so fine. Then he is so gentlemanly, so distingué in his appearance. But, strange to say, Rose, I do not like him at all."

That morning we confided to Mrs. Arey our intention of leaving the hotel. We were tired, I explained, and were going where we could be perfectly quiet, and attend to our music, and painting, and books.

Mrs. Arey approved of us less than ever. "Going, when I've taken so much pleasure in bringing you out, and you've been such a success in society! What will everybody say? Do you know, Rose, I shall never get over your refusing Charlie Vanderpool? To be sure, you are young, and need not be in any particular hurry to marry; but I think that you are foolish girls, both of you."

We thanked her for her kind interest in our affairs, and promised that whenever we found ourselves dull and lonely, we would come back to her again.

"I do so want to help plan your trousseaux when you are married," said she. "There's nothing I enjoy so much as doing that sort of thing."

We both laughed, and assured her that we should be delighted to have her assistance when we were married; but she would probably be obliged to wait long before being thus happily employed.

It was in the Bohemian quarter of the city that we made our new home. We decided that that locality would be by far the most interesting one, and we should have an opportunity to know the people by being make-believe Bohemians ourselves. So we took three rooms in a large brick building. It was a business street, and there were stores underneath; but all about us were gathered such a crowd of lodgers! On one side of us lived a professional violin player with his wife; on the other side the sign of a "gentleman of the brush" flourished; overhead, an organ player was drawing melancholy sounds from the resounding pipes by day and night; and opposite dwelt a jolly family of actors, who left their doors open in the most inviting way, and gave us the benefit of a good many amusing rehearsals. There were three or

four young ladies on the same floor with us, a singing teacher, a professional singer, a landscape painter, an authoress and two actresses.

We liked everything immensely. It was such a queer cosy way of living; our neighbors were so interesting, and we could work without any interruption whatever. Velvet, and lace, and jewels disappeared like magic, and Rose looked so nice and homelike in one of her drab dresses again. Still, she had acquired some nameless advantage, as far as looks were concerned, since we came to the city. Certainly her complexion had faded, and, after so many nights of dissipation, her bright eyes were less bright. But, for all that, she had improved greatly; and I was gratified to hear her remark that the same mysterious change had come over me. Our rooms were very pretty when we had arranged them to our minds. The furniture was simple, but we had chosen it of soft bright colors. We filled the windows with blossoming plants, and hung a few choice pictures on the delicately-tinted walls. We had warm red curtains in the windows, and bright fires in the grates, and were as happy as two kittens.

"Did you notice the name on the door at the left of us, Lou?" said Rose, on the night of our arrival. "It is Meyer; and I wonder if it isn't the same artist who came to Shelburne three or four summers ago, and made a sketch of the farmhouse? His name was Meyer, you know. Don't you remember him? I thought he was so handsome and nice."

"Indeed, I have forgotten how he looked," said I. "I should have forgotten that any such person ever came to Shelburne, if I hadn't been reminded of it by you so often since. Artists often came to Shelburne, Rose. And pray, how many moments of this particular artist's society did you enjoy? I should certainly imagine by your behaviour that you had taken a leap in love on that occasion."

"Stranger things have happened," said Rose, with a little shadow of a blush; "and, put it all together, I enjoyed his society as much as an hour and a half. I met him in the meadow, in the first place, and he walked home with me; and he was so agreeable, Lou. Then he called at the house, remaining, certainly, a half hour. Then, after that, he walked home from

church with me. I am in such a hurry to get a peep at this Mr. Meyer's face, and see if it is the same one!"

"Rose," said I, solemnly, "if you're going to get up any flirtations here, I'm going to leave at once. I thought we were going to be very quiet and studious, to ignore everything but the deeply instructive. As we are situated, two young girls alone, I think it will be much the better way to do."

"Indeed, Miss Wisdom, can't I speak of a gentleman without being accused of a desire to get up a flirtation? I am very well able to take care of myself, dear. Don't imagine that you are a schoolteacher yet, and that I am one of your pupils. Then I thought that we came here to see a different sort of people."

"Yes, to see them, but not to talk with them, unless fate throws them directly in our way. I've heard that in such places one seldom is on speaking terms with—"

I was interrupted by a tap on the door. Rose hastened to open it, and a little body in a black gown and lavender ribbons, with very large eyeglasses on a very small nose, stood there smiling upon us. She introduced herself as Miss Bradley.

"Excuse me for calling so soon," she said, "but we are very social in this building, and seldom allow strangers to be strangers long, unless they prefer to be so. And I thought as we were going to have a little *soiree* in our rooms to-morrow night, it would be a nice time for you to get acquainted with your neighbors, if you like. I am sure we should all be delighted to see you."

Rose and I were both rather bewildered, by this unexpected and exceeding sociability; and having no time to consider the matter, said, of course, that we should be happy to come.

"We are all of the same sort here—artists, musicians, actors, teachers, authors," she said, looking at Rose's piano, which was piled with classical-looking music, and my easel, with sympathetic and approving eyes; "and we have such nice times. Our weekly *soirees* are delightful. Each one of the company contributes something to the entertainment. Mr. Meyer, who lives the next door to you, reads pathetic pieces charmingly. We can't always depend upon him, though, he is so busy. Mr. Reid the schoolmaster is, as

happy in his rendering of the humorous. We have bits of tragedy from Mr. and Mrs. Walcott. There are four or five ladies and gentlemen who either sing or play delightfully. The artists exhibit their new pictures, and my aunt, with whom I live, and who is also Miss Bradley, usually reads an essay on art. Miss Herkimer the poetess often reads an original poem, and Mr. Forester the journalist some spicy newspaper article. Sometimes, too, we have a story from Mrs. Selden the authoress. Of course we shall excuse you from contributing anything this time, but I hope you will favor us on some future occasion."

"This is escaping society with a vengeance!" said Rose, laughing as the door closed after our guest.

The next evening we donned plain black silks, and precisely at eight o'clock presented ourselves in Miss Bradley's apartment. That was the time mentioned, but we found very few of the guests assembled. Miss Bradley, senior, greeted us with great *empressement*, and motioned us to seats of honor at her side. She was an odd-looking little elderly lady, who wore a startlingly large copy of the *Sistine Madonna* in enamel for a bosom-pin, and curiously-carved bracelets on her wrists. Her every sentence was sprinkled with Ruskin-like phrases, and she seemed like a sort of high-priestess of art. With the exception of a few fine pictures on the walls, the room looked dreadfully poverty-stricken, and the dress of the company betokened slim pockets more than careless negligence. They were a merry, friendly, genial party. I found myself laughing and chatting with them as if I had always been one of the group; but Rose was silent and preoccupied. She was watching the door anxiously, for Mr. Meyer had not yet appeared. At last a tall, pale, handsome young man entered, whom I recognized at once to be that gentleman.

"'Tis he," said Rose, joyfully. "I wonder if he will remember me."

I noticed that all the young ladies were especially smiling when he appeared. Closely following his footsteps came a grave-looking middle-aged gentleman, in grave dark clothes, and with a grave quiet voice. When he spoke his eyes contradicted the gravity of his appearance, though his whole face lighted up, and he was really fine-looking. Not only the young

ladies, but the whole company brightened when he came in.

"I was so afraid you wouldn't come, Mr. Reid!" they exclaimed, in the same breath.

He returned some merry greeting.

Mr. Meyer excited my sympathy, he looked so worn and pale. He recognized Rose at once, and I thought they both seemed inconsistently glad to see each other, for a young man and a young woman who had never met but once or twice, and that was so long ago. Indeed, he scarcely left her side for the whole evening. And there were two or three young ladies who looked at my brown-eyed sister as if they were not lost in admiration for her.

Mr. Reid, at the request of Miss Bradley, commenced the entertainment by reading selections from Mark Twain and Dickens. As Miss Mary promised—the younger Miss Bradley was Miss Mary—he read delightfully, and I laughed until the tears ran down my cheeks, though I never was able to laugh much over Mark Twain before. When he had finished there was a little interval for conversation. Then Miss Lasell, a tall graceful blonde, performed a sonata on the piano with great delicacy of touch, and very little feeling. During this interval I heard from my neighbor, the authoress, that Mr. Meyer was supposed to be deeply interested in this young lady, and that she was supposed to return the feeling. I learned also that Miss Mary Bradley was engaged to Herr Lindgreen the organ player, and that the widowed portrait painter, Mrs. Arles, was supposed to be engaged to Mr. Forester the journalist. Then Herr Lindgreen favored us with a violin solo, the one which he played the evening before at a most successful club concert. He was applauded with great enthusiasm. Then there were more jokes and gossip, and then Mr. Meyer was called upon to read. He begged to be excused, saying that he had not time to prepare anything for the occasion; but Miss Bradley would not let him off until he had recited a little poem from Mrs. Browning, which he did with great delicacy and feeling. Then Miss Bradley read her essay, which was to me rather a mysterious collection of high-sounding words. The audience received it well, however, and Miss Bradley herself seemed to be very well satisfied with her efforts. One of the artists exhib-

ited a picture just finished, which was lovely. It was the interior of an old barn. There was a pile of red apples, with a jolly-looking sunbeam glinting on it, in the dusky background, and in the foreground, tumbling amid withered corn husks, a cluster of chubby children and a white kitten.

It was for sale, and I determined to ask Mrs. Arey to purchase it for me. On the whole, we passed a very pleasant evening. I enjoyed my new friends more than any people I had ever met. They were so simple and friendly, so unconventional and jolly. I certainly never felt so much at home with strangers. Mr. Reid and I had a sharp little discussion on schoolteaching. Miss Bradley pumped me to see how much I knew about art, and looked a little disengaged at the result; and Mrs. Selden the authoress took me into her confidence, and told me her whole history, as well as that of several others in the room. She informed me as to the characteristics of all the guests. "Mr. Reid is a delightful man in his way, very entertaining, but he is very ungallant to the ladies. Never was known to call on one, unless especially invited; and is careful not to pay any one particular attention. Indeed, I never knew him to talk to any young lady as long as he did to you to-night. I think you must have made a conquest," said she.

"What queer nice people they are!" said I to Rose, when we were in our own room once more, at twelve o'clock.

"I don't think they are any of them nice but Mr. Meyer," said Rose, shaking her head, doubtfully. "He's too nice to be in that set. Miss Bradley is unutterably dreadful. Do you know, Lou, that their dress and the arrangement of their rooms oppresses me with melancholy? I know the little make-shifts of poverty so well. I'd a great deal rather be with rich people, after a'l. Indeed, I like their ways better. I know that you adore them just because they are not rich. Poverty puts halos round people's head for some eyes."

"But Mr. Meyer has a halo round his head, rich or poor," said I, sharply.

"The halo of genius, they say," said she, carelessly. "Mr. Meyer is very nice, very nice indeed, Lou!" As if I had contradicted it.

We were continually seeing or hearing Mr. Meyer after that. If Rose sang, and she did have a sweet voice, he would open

his door softly. He brought his pictures for our inspection, studying Rose's face for approval or disapproval; and it always told the truth, in spite of her tongue. We met him mysteriously in our walks, and he invited us to art-club exhibitions and picture galleries. I wondered how it was about Miss Lasell, and scolded Rose, indiscriminately.

All our neighbors were very social, and we had hardly been in the building a fortnight before Mr. Reid called. By-and-by his calls became very frequent. Rose commenced to scold me.

"But I am not supplanting any other lady," I would reply; "and it's different for two such grave proper people as Mr. Reid and I to be friendly. You are so romantic, you know. You'll be falling in love with Mr. Meyer the next thing, really and truly in love with him; and he's too poor and too ambitious to think of marrying."

The remainder of winter and spring wore away. Summer had come, and Rose and I were preparing to go to Shelburne. Rose had practised her music very diligently, and I had improved wonderfully in my painting. We had read a great deal, we had seen and studied fine pictures and statuary. We had listened to scientific lectures, and educated our ears by hearing classical concerts. And besides all this, we had both made ourselves quite well acquainted with the French and German languages.

"What wonders we have achieved!" said Rose, looking back with satisfaction. "How much we have accomplished, besides shining in Bohemian society. Lou, are you ready to go back to Mrs. Arey, and laces, and diamonds, and the German again?"

"Never!" said I, resolutely.

"And do you intend to live all your life in these lodgings, making believe poor, and hiding around the corner when you wish to hire a carriage?"

"Never," I said again, with a little meaning smile. "What do you propose to do, Rose?"

"Mr. Meyer proposes that we have a little cottage of our own, just out of town, when we are able to marry," said she, trying to look unconcerned. "It was only talk about his being in love with Miss Lasell."

"Mr. Meyer!" I exclaimed. "Rose, do you know what you are thinking of? Did Mrs. Arey spend her breath in vain when she pictured to you the heights you might attain, matrimonially, through such a fortune? A little has been bought with less money than you possess."

"That's it, Lou. Mrs. Arey did not spend her breath in vain. Her worldliness disgusted me. There is no such word as love in her vocabulary. Faith and hope have only to deal with the money markets, and life, with her set, is only one long struggle for the costliest diamonds, the finest establishment. I wouldn't like to be pinched; I hate poverty, but I would marry Mr. Meyer if I hadn't a cent of my own. It is so nice just to be liked for yourself. Won't Frank be surprised when he knows about my money? I hope that he won't be too glad! But you haven't told me what you propose to do yet; and, as you are going to leave here, I should like to know."

"Mr. Reid proposes that we shall have a quiet home of our own, and go to house-keeping at once, as soon as we are married this fall," said I, anticipating an outburst from my sister.

But she only repeated the words I had said to her, in her mocking manner, and assured me in the end that she was quite sure that it would be *so sometime*; and that if Mr. Reid wasn't Methusaleh (he is thirty-five), she should like him very much for a brother-in-law.

While we were at Shelburne that summer we were visited by our future husbands; and during the long romantic walks and confidential talks in the shady Shelburne lanes and meadows, with these two dearest of our souls, something was revealed which disconcerted and troubled us not a little at first.

My trouble was deep in my mind, when one morning Rose ran to me with hers.

"Lou, O Lou!" she gasped, "did you know that everybody in the Rogers' Building was perfectly aware of our wealth all the time? Frank said that he was afraid to propose to me on that account at first. He says, too, that he never will spend my money; and unless I'm willing to live as he should be obliged to live, he won't marry me, after all. He thought my tastes were simple, and I preferred that way of living because I had been brought up in such a simple way. He didn't know that it was only a little experiment. I almost wish I hadn't seen Frank. You know we were not going to marry for years, if ever, Lou, when we left Mrs. Arey."

"I know," said I. "Mr. Reid—Frederic said almost the same thing to me that Frank did to you. But then, my tastes are simple. I am perfectly willing to live like any ordinary schoolteacher's wife. I am disappointed, though. I wanted to tell him that he had married a rich woman un-aware, to make his eyes open with surprise. Then Mrs. Arey put such worldly notions into my head, I was almost afraid at first. Rose, dear, this is a strange world."

Everything ended well, however. Rose and I have both been married many years, and we are both happy. Rose's husband has acquired both money and fame for himself, so Rose is elegant, as she likes to be. As for me, I am content to live in the moderate way which my husband says is consistent for a schoolmistress's family. I am quite sure that my money was not what he married me for. Rose is perfectly satisfied on that score, too.

# AN OPEN QUESTION.

Chester, Cora

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## AN OPEN QUESTION.

BY CORA CHESTER.

"Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,  
Love gives itself, but is not bought."

IT was at one of Mrs. Hilton's select soirees that Bret Durell first met Faith Fletcher.

He was not a susceptible man, neither a flirt, yet something prompted him to bend down as the saucy dark eyes looked up into his, in answer to the introduction, and say:

"I am not a dancing man, Miss Fletcher, in fact, seldom court the Terpsichorean muse; yet something tells me that you could endue me with the poetry of motion. Will you try an awkward partner?"

A flush of amusement twinkled for an instant in Miss Fletcher's eyes, and she was half tempted to refuse; for a reputation for gracefulness is as dear to belles as ever was Cassio's good name to him; and what celebrated Hebe cares to trip in Olympus, even if held up by a handsome, grand-looking man who has caused the blunder?

A pretty society falsehood trembled upon the rosy lips; then the girl's kind nature triumphed; and she rose, shaking out innumerable flounces, ruffles and streamers. "We will try one turn, Mr. Durell."

How she dreaded his probable awkwardness, as she felt the eyes of Roy Lisle, Dodworth's prime favorite, scanning her partner with insolent wonder! They were the first on the floor, and as the strains of the "Blue Danube" floated upon the air, her fears vanished. She was an admirable dancer, and her partner caught the enthusiasm that beamed from her bright eyes and charged her footsteps with fairy grace. She felt herself borne down the room as if on the wings of a simeon, keeping time to the dreamy rhythm of the waltz music; and never before had lighted parlors and Strauss's fancies seemed such a world of enchantment to either.

Yet Miss Fletcher had whirled down lighted ballrooms with dozens of partners

to this same music; and perhaps Bret Durell was not such a novice in society as he would fain have Miss Fletcher believe.

During that brilliant Washington winter they met frequently; found themselves in the same merry party bound for Mount Vernon; mounted the dome of the Capitol together, and gazed down upon the stately buildings and negro hovels dotted here and there over the city of 'magnificent distances; or, from the galleries of the Senate Chamber, listened to long debates, paying more attention, if the truth were told, to whispered nothings which fell from each other's lips, than to the wise saws propounded by our learned members.

Everywhere they met, as people must of necessity do during a winter's campaign in Washington; and Bret Durell was not the only man that season whose head was turned by the beautiful Miss Fletcher's studied coquettices.

Whether she led the German with him, in all the splendor of full dress and pearl powder, or knelt beside him in St. John's quiet church, confessing her innumerable sins out of her dainty velvet prayer-book, it was all the same; he was hopelessly and irrevocably in love.

He realized it with a bitter pang one sunny May day as they walked together amid the crowd of people which throngs the president's grounds every pleasant Saturday in warm weather. A few belated birds of fashion still lingered in the capital, among them Miss Fletcher and her now never-absent attendant, Bret Durell.

"How I long for a breath of mountain air!" sighed the lady, with a becoming upward glance of her long-lashed eyes from behind an absurdly large fan. "This is our last evening together, and to-morrow—" A suggestive sigh finished the sentence.

"To-morrow to green fields and pastures new," said Durell; "or, in more modern times, to-morrow to fresh flirtations and victims new. Are you sighing like Alexander for more worlds to conquer, Miss Fletcher?"

Miss Fletcher smiled. She was in a gentle twilight mood that day—by the way, "an excellent thing in woman," especially women assured of their own power to please, as Miss Fletcher certainly was.

The smile awoke wonderful dimples in her pink cheeks, and chased the shadows

from her eyes. Durell wondered at these changes, and found the scanning of her face a dangerous study.

"O, I am content with the extent of my dominion now," she laughed. "I have hosts of summer friends, plenty of the good things of this life, and, above all, one true knight to amuse me, although he looks so grave now that his company is not conducive to gayety. A moment ago you were entertained; now you look bored. It is hard to please such fickle creatures as men."

Durell's face did not lighten at her railing. A dark fierce look had sprung up in his eyes, a look which checked the light words on her lips, so unutterably sad and despairing was it.

"I am going to ask you a serious question, Miss Fletcher," he startled her by saying.

She flattered herself that she knew perfectly well what the all-important question would be. So she lowered her sun-umbrella a trifle, and waited with half-averted face and rapidly beating heart for his next words. She loved this man, and meant to accept him; yet she knew full well the value of tormenting uncertainty, and had not heard her worldly brother quote in vain the well-worn lines:

"Your fruit that falls without picking  
Is rather too mellow for me."

Miss Fletcher was a discreet as well as a proud girl, and by not the quiver of an eyelash could Durell read the emotion his few words had awakened.

The silence became embarrassing. He was writing in the sand the word "Faith" with his light cane, and she was following the movement of his hand as if her destiny was being formed with each fantastic letter.

Her sweet well-modulated voice brought him out of dreamland and back to the present.

"I am all attention, Mr. Durell."

"It is a momentous question, Miss Fletcher; one upon which a life's happiness is staked. My query is, What shall a man do if he finds himself engaged to a lady he has entirely ceased to care for? As a man of honor, will he marry her, or would it not be playing a nobler part to confess his faithlessness and be freed from his promise? I state this as the case of a friend of mine who wishes my advice, and

I have come to you for a woman's opinion. Your purer heart and clearer perceptions can surely lead him right."

He ended with an embarrassed laugh, and flushed to the temples as he felt her scornful eyes scanning his face.

She was not blinded by his flimsy deception, and a deathly pallor had spread from forehead to chin of her perfect face.

"A true woman, knowing how utterly a broken engagement ruins a constant girl's life, would tell you there was only one way." She turned her face away from him, striving in vain for her self-possession that had deserted her for the first time in her life. "An honorable man will marry the lady he has compromised by his attentions."

"But has a man any right to marry a woman if he has no love to give her? Would it not be more honorable to confess his utter poverty of affection before it is too late? Would it be possible to keep up a pious fraud after marriage, even if one could deceive during a courtship? A loving woman would be sure to discover the deceit. The fair ones have an intuition as to our feelings towards them. I sometimes think, Miss Fletcher, your sex is only half human, and hold communion with uncanny spirits, I feel so utterly insignificant in your presence."

Miss Fletcher was thinking unutterably bitter things of him just then—was calling him craven and coward in her outraged love; yet to him her face was as calm as a summer's sky, and the cold even voice discussed love with him as if it had been some abstruse subject of science.

"I have not changed my opinion, Mr. Durell. Your *friend*," with a bitter emphasis, "should sacrifice his own happiness for the woman who doubtless loves him better than her own life. You are quite sure she loves him?"

"Quite sure," he replied. He could not falsify with her pure eyes scanning his face.

"Then there is only one way. Your friend must marry her and make her a good husband. If she has no great defects, he will grow to love her in time."

"And live all his life a hypocrite's life, with a smile on his lips, and no love in his heart; give a true woman an unloving husband? He is unloving, and will be to the end of their married life. You are wrong, Miss Fletcher, in assuming that he will

grow to love her. He cannot; he is utterly bankrupt in affection for her. It is only a promise made during a foolish boyhood. She is unsympathetic, childish, and has ceased to answer his wants. He has since met a woman gifted, emotional, faulty, to be sure, yet suited to his nature. One with whom he could be insanely happy, could he be blessed with her love; a woman who appreciates and understands him, and who could make a nobler, better man of him. He feels wedded to her in every thought and feeling, and without her life will be a dreary waste indeed! Yet do you, with all the power of conferring supreme happiness upon him, condemn him to a life of wretchedness and falsehood; a life he detests and abhors? Ah, Faith, such ideas of duty and honor are overstrained. If I were the man you allotted such misery to, would your verdict be the same?"

He was searching her face again, and she knew what his meaning was. The terrible temptation nearly mastered her; then the latent heroism of her nature awoke, and with an effort she whispered:

"She loves you, Mr. Durell. You do not deserve it, but it is some men's fate to have all women bow to them. Do not mock her happiness, too. I see mother with Lieutenant Camden. Good day."

She passed by him, and before he realized it he was alone; utterly and entirely alone, with only the torn fragments of a lost happiness to comfort him.

"I will confess all to Myrtle to-morrow," he murmured. "She, poor child, will release me if I can steal my heart to tell her the truth, and then— No, I will not yet dream of a happiness that must be built upon the ruins of a loving woman's heart. Ah, Durell, you, a so-called man of honor, have proved yourself a villain. Does Faith love me? I think not; yet sometimes I have seen a light in her eyes that only deep emotion could kindle in such a woman's heart. I, a strong man, tremble when I dream of the possibility of a future without her; and yet, six months ago, I was happy in my oyster-like existence, and sneered at worldly belles. Miss Fletcher has taught me that a true woman's heart can beat beneath a fashionable exterior; that it is possible for all feminine loveliness to dwell in a so-styled 'woman of the world.' " \* \* \* \* \*

"Mother, put back the curtains so that I can see the sunset brighten the purple hills. There are apple-blossoms on the window-sill, and the trees are loaded with them. Is it really spring, and is that one of my last year's birds chirping in the garden? The winter is over at last. It has been so long going, and has been so dark and cold. I pray I may never pass such another!"

Myrtle Thorne's patient sigh was echoed by her mother, as, with overflowing eyes, the good lady pretended to busy herself at the open window. With a mother's quick perceptions, she felt that not many, perhaps not one more winter would pass over her darling's head.

She needed not to inquire the reason of her daughter's sadness. It was written too plainly in the girl's pale cheeks, tearful eyes and wasted hands, clasping so tightly a torn letter, dated Nov. 11th; Bret Durell's last, though here was a May sun streaming over the carpet, and a south wind was blowing the apple blossoms into the open window.

"Don't be a dreamin' over that letter any more, daughtly," trying in vain to check the sobs that would choke the words back. "He aint worth thinking about; and I've often told you that now-a-days there aint no sort of dependence to be put in young men. As he used to read of nights about that 'ere crazy Dane, 'they are arrant knaves all, trust none of 'em!' That's what Shakspeare says, and I expect he knew more 'bout human nature than you or me can find out in a lifetime. Come, chirp up and be as gay as other girls be. The doctor says your getting well depends on yourself. See if you can't walk around a bit, and to-morrow father'll take you down in the parlor, and you can sit in your big chair by the window."

"O I can't, mother, I can't!" cried the girl, with sudden pain, pressing her thin fingers to her eyes to hide the fast-flowing tears. "I can't be gay, and I don't want to get well! I know it is wicked, but if Bret don't love me I want to die. I hope God will take me now, and not let me live to see him bring home a wife. I never knew how much I loved him till I thought of that one night; then I prayed so hard that I'd be taken. I am not afraid to die, mother dear; don't cry, or you'll make me sorry, too."

The mother had her daughter in her arms, and was kissing the pale face again and again. Is it any wonder that she almost cursed Durell as she looked upon the wreck of her once blooming little girl, and marked what his neglect had done?

The golden light faded out of the sky, and sombre shadows blackened the hills. The wind had changed, and told of a stormy morrow. Myrtle drew back from the window with a shiver.

"It is like the dark river that leads to the shining land. A moment ago I was not afraid; now I see only blackness on the other side. O, I sometimes fear I have learned distrust of my God in my utter faithlessness of everything earthly. Bret used to laugh at my childish faith, and wonder at my credulity; but he loved me for it, and almost cried with me over poor little Dora's death in 'David Copperfield.' He called her husband a villain, and said how such a man could not prize the rarest of all wives—a simple trusting child. He would be content for life with such a one, he said; and kissing me, used to call me his ideal Dora. That was six months ago, though, and who knows what has happened since to change him?"

"I wouldn't speculate as to his doings, child. I never liked the idea of his a-marrying you from the first, and God knows best, after all. Durell aint a church member, never speaks in meeting; and some folks do say when he was a boy he didn't walk as straight as he might."

"I don't care how wicked he was, mother," sighed Myrtle, her pretty blue eyes, full of perfect love and trust, looking dreamily out into the twilight. "If I knew he was wicked now I couldn't help loving him!"

"No more than the poor birds can a-help flying into the serpent's mouth," muttered the old lady. "I pray God will root it out of your heart, Myrtle; but I am afeard the mischief is done."

She placed the lamp upon the table before the one window, and its light fell over the lawn out upon the darkening road. Two gentlemen, driving along, noted its appearance, and one remarked, anxiously:

"That's Myrtle's room, doctor. Is it possible she's worse?"

"No telling, Durell. It is a nervous fever that has stuck to her all winter, and the poor child may sink under it. I am

sorry for you, my boy, but it's best to be prepared for the worst."

Durell shaded his eyes with one hand, that his companion, a man whose profession had hardened him to the sorrows of humanity, might not see the great tears that would persist in filling his eyes as he thought of the past. His cruel neglect had dealt Myrtle her deathblow. He felt as certain of it as though the mark of Cain had been visible upon his forehead. No more need to trouble about the future now; death would release him, and he, a self-convicted murderer, would live on to enjoy existence without the poor little girl whose voice had once been the sweetest music in the world to him.

As they drew up before the house a serving-man dashed into the road, and almost ran into the doctor's gig.

"Och doother, are yeers here? Howly virgin be praised, sir! I was jist making for yer shop. The swate little mistress has got the relapse, sir."

"What I feared." And pushing by Durell, the doctor ran towards the house.

An hour later Durell was summoned to the sick room.

"You cannot do any harm now," whispered the doctor in grave tones, "and you may do a world of good. She has been crying and calling your name ever since she was taken."

Durell knelt by the snowy bed and gazed upon the pretty childish face with its transparent skin, fever-flushed cheeks, and framework of tangled gold.

As he took one tiny wasted hand in his own the white lids lifted, and the blue eyes lighted with new life. He gathered her to his arms, and called her endearing names. In that moment all the past of that Washington winter seemed a brilliant dream, and Faith Fletcher's bewitching face ceased to haunt him, as it had for weary days. He was but a man, after all; no better and no worse than the rest of his sex; and with his early love in his arms, all his old tenderness for Myrtle Thorne came back to him. He thought he was honest in his newly-returned love, and flattered himself that he had never, even in thought, been faithless to his word.

That was when Myrtle clasped both tiny hands around his neck and kissed him; not as in days past, when bashfulness would not permit her to betray her love,

but of her own accord; for six months from that May day, with a November rain beating outside the little parlor, Bret Durell spoke the few words that made Myrtle Thorne his wife.

Later, who can tell his thoughts, as day after day he struggled with the love that filled his heart for Faith Fletcher, and endeavored to fill Myrtle's life with every joy? People called him a model husband, and wondered at his only too-evident adoration of his "pale-faced chit of a wife," while he tried in vain to check the pain that would throb in his heart at some chance reference to that long-ago winter, and passed hurriedly by the newspaper items which named her as the reigning belle of fashionable circles in the gay capital. He felt how useless were his struggles, when he noted, among society gossipings, the rumor of her approaching marriage to Lieutenant Camden. He knew then that during his lifetime her dear face would never cease to haunt his memory; that he had "sketched the snake, not killed it."

Much has been said and sung of the beach at Long Branch, but I doubt if any description ever truly depicted the beauty of the place upon a summer's morning—the sparkling, dancing waves, the happy children running hither and thither with their French nurses, and the picturesque-looking bathers preparing for their daily plunge. Surely the life and beauty of the place were enough to make a true lover of nature happy without the artificial pleasures of the hotels.

Myrtle Durell certainly thought so, with a little sigh of content, as she sat in an invalid's chair upon the beach and watched the ever-changing scene. She was somewhat of a student of faces, and flattered herself that she could read characters by physiques, though her husband's heart was still in reality a sealed book to his loving wife, in spite of her constant study of his every change of expression. She had never yet discovered the pious fraud which had blessed her life; and who could have dashed the cup of happiness from her lips by telling her the truth? Surely not her husband, who had studied his part until acting a lie had become a second nature.

"I have been married five years," thought Myrtle; "such happy, happy years!"

I wonder every woman doesn't marry. But no one could get another like *my* husband. That lovely girl who spoke to me the other day is doubtless in love, though she doesn't seem to care for any of her admirers here. I should like to know the happy man she's sighing for; I'd bring them suddenly together, see the sad look leave her eyes, and wind up with a grand wedding."

No one knows to what immense heights these airy castles might have attained had not the subject of them herself demolished them by drawing near the invalid's chair.

"A beautiful day, is it not?"

A commonplace remark enough, but it chased the sorrow from the dark eyes for an instant, and showed Myrtle how beautiful the girl's face was in animation.

"Heavenly; and, like a good invalid, I am out enjoying it. The doctor says this sea-air is all I need to build me up."

The lady looked down at Myrtle's pale face with a pitying glance.

"Confined to that chair, and yet always so patient and cheerful. Tell me, what is the secret of your happiness?"

"A contented mind, my dear, and a perfect husband. I see you smile incredulously, but he is perfect, and seems to return my adoration with interest. We are a model couple. I know you think me a goose!"

She laughed, a happy little laugh, and the lady, with a sigh, turned half away.

"It is odd I have never met this wonder of wonders, a perfect husband; but then, I have only been here three days."

"O, that isn't odd at all. Bret can only spare two days a week for me. I haven't asked your name yet. Mine is Mrs. Durell."

Her listener turned deathly pale, and grew strangely inattentive; but Myrtle, enlarging on her favorite topic of her husband's perfections, never noted.

"As I was saying, he is away a great deal, and lately has been busy raising a subscription for the widows of those poor fishermen who were killed here last week. He is so good. He wasn't always a Christian, you know, but says I have been his good angel, and led him to God. Now he is better, far better than I am, and my only trouble is he keeps growing beyond me in everything! After we were married he had a terrible fever, and the doctor gave him up. Then he would rave about Washing-

ton, going to church, and would talk continually about 'faith.' Mother says she thinks he experienced religion the winter before our marriage; and I know when he got well he joined the church, and is one of the head members now. It made me so very happy, for I couldn't imagine a heaven without him; and mother said unless he was a Presbyterian there was no hope for him."

Her companion smiled in a dreary sort of a way.

Suddenly her chattering ceased. She stopped, with a moan of pain, and lay back in her chair pale as death.

The lady stooped over her and called loudly for help. Bret Durell, who had left the hotel, had caught sight of his wife, and was beside her chair in an instant.

"My poor darling! Myrtle, look up. It frightens me to see these fainting spells."

"Is your wife subject to them?"

He turned suddenly at sound of her voice, that clear sweet voice that seemed an echo of his happy past. The blood mounted to his temples, but with an effort he mastered his emotion.

"She has been an invalid for years."

That was all that passed between them. She left him abruptly, as she had left him once before; and he, to do him justice, after the first wild pain of meeting her had passed, thought only of his wife. She claimed his pity, and, in truth, held a large portion of his heart.

Men love best, declare to the contrary as they may, these simple clinging women who look up to and worship them. It is pleasant for one of the lords of creation to find himself suddenly idealized into a deity, with some fond woman to constantly kneel and adore before the shrine of his greatness. He cannot sustain the character of a lover for a great length of time. Pygmalion would soon have wearied of his statue had she remained a statue; and no doubt after she had been endued with life he treated her much as other men treat their wives, and by humblest adoration for her creator she more than repaid him for the doubtful advantage of introducing her to the bittersweet of this life.

Bret Durell had not been insensible to his wife's devotion to himself, and his self-imposed task had grown easier as the months had passed away.

Wheeled before the hotel window, where

she could watch the moonlight wash the beach, with Durell's arms clasped close around her, her last words blessed his life with a knowledge that he had done what he could.

"How blissful these few years have been, darling! You have made me so happy, Bret, I can't bear to think of heaven without you. Don't cry. God knows best, but I hope he won't let all the brightness leave your life with me. I have prayed and prayed so many nights of late that some great happiness will dawn for you with my death. It mustn't make you very sad, my darling, to lose me. I have only been a burden and trouble to you."

"No, no, Myrtle," with choking voice. "God knows the desire to make you happy has been the one object of my life. Your love has blessed me more than I deserve. What have I done to win such a woman's devotion? You have made me very happy."

And such are the inconsistencies of our natures that, with the softening influences of that solemn hour upon him, he thought that he spoke the truth to his dying wife!

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Two years later Bret Durell again finds himself in Washington. He wanders listlessly up and down the long parlors of the "Arlington," glancing curiously now and then at a lady, the only occupant of a small side room. Her back is towards him as she softly touches the keys of a sweet-toned piano; and she evidently thinks herself alone, for soon her voice accompanies the weird music. Every word seems laden with a tear as he listens.

"O ceaseless cravings never hushed to rest!  
O withered hopes that haunt the lonely breast!  
Fulfilled will these vague longings ever be,  
Or resurrected joys return to me?"

"After the long watch of the dreary night  
Shall golden dawn e'er greet my heavy sight?  
After the silence of a loving tomb  
Shall sweetest music ever pierce my gloom?"

He knows the clear rich voice at once, and as she sings a great change passes over the dark cynical features.

"Faith?"

The warm color flushes face and throat

as she recognizes him in the dim light, and holds out both hands in glad welcome.

There are no reproaches or explanations between them. They love too entirely to need either; the past and all its bitterness for one moment is forgotten.

She sits before him with bowed head, and he gazes down upon her with all the old love, that he dared not tell her years before, surging in his heart. The silence is unbroken save for the rustling of a sheet of music Miss Fletcher nervously rolls and unrolls in both white hands. Separation and time have wrought changes in both, and neither can at once leap the impalpable gulf between them. They feel how impossible it is to take up the thread of their romance just where they left it seven years before. These years have made them wiser and more fearful of the future.

Durell knows that he must speak the words that will separate their lives forever or bind them more closely together.

Some musicians have paused beneath the open window, and the strains of the "Blue Danube" float out upon the sultry air. Their eyes meet, and hers are full of tears.

"It was that first meeting, Faith, that caused my sin. I was weak, and by that weakness wrecked my life, and, worse than that, rendered the best years of yours unhappy. If you knew how impossible it was for me to banish myself from your presence, you would not blame me, even though I had no right to love you in those days. Since, I have tried to atone for the past, but I often doubt if I did wisely in following your advice. Faith, can you forgive me, and love me a little in spite of my folly?"

She is but a woman, and in her great joy forgets the wrong he has done her. She feels fully repaid for the sacrifice she made of her life's happiness seven years before; and as she raises the hand she is caressing to her lips, she seems to see an angel's face smiling kindly upon them.

Surely Myrtle's prayer has been answered, and a great happiness has indeed dawned for her husband with her death. Who can say whether the deception that blessed her short life were right or wrong?

# AN OPEN QUESTION.

Chester, Cora

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pg. 171

## AN OPEN QUESTION.

BY CORA CHESTER.

"Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,  
Love gives itself, but is not bought."

IT was at one of Mrs. Hilton's select soirees that Bret Durell first met Faith Fletcher.

He was not a susceptible man, neither a flirt, yet something prompted him to bend down as the saucy dark eyes looked up into his, in answer to the introduction, and say:

"I am not a dancing man, Miss Fletcher, in fact, seldom court the Terpsichorean muse; yet something tells me that you could endue me with the poetry of motion. Will you try an awkward partner?"

A flush of amusement twinkled for an instant in Miss Fletcher's eyes, and she was half tempted to refuse; for a reputation for gracefulness is as dear to belles as ever was Cassio's good name to him; and what celebrated Hebe cares to trip in Olympus, even if held up by a handsome, grand-looking man who has caused the blunder?

A pretty society falsehood trembled upon the rosy lips; then the girl's kind nature triumphed; and she rose, shaking out innumerable flounces, ruffles and streamers. "We will try one turn, Mr. Durell."

How she dreaded his probable awkwardness, as she felt the eyes of Roy Lisle, Dodworth's prime favorite, scanning her partner with insolent wonder! They were the first on the floor, and as the strains of the "Blue Danube" floated upon the air, her fears vanished. She was an admirable dancer, and her partner caught the enthusiasm that beamed from her bright eyes and charged her footsteps with fairy grace. She felt herself borne down the room as if on the wings of a simeon, keeping time to the dreamy rhythm of the waltz music; and never before had lighted parlors and Strauss's fancies seemed such a world of enchantment to either.

Yet Miss Fletcher had whirled down lighted ballrooms with dozens of partners

to this same music; and perhaps Bret Durell was not such a novice in society as he would fain have Miss Fletcher believe.

During that brilliant Washington winter they met frequently; found themselves in the same merry party bound for Mount Vernon; mounted the dome of the Capitol together, and gazed down upon the stately buildings and negro hovels dotted here and there over the city of 'magnificent distances; or, from the galleries of the Senate Chamber, listened to long debates, paying more attention, if the truth were told, to whispered nothings which fell from each other's lips, than to the wise saws propounded by our learned members.

Everywhere they met, as people must of necessity do during a winter's campaign in Washington; and Bret Durell was not the only man that season whose head was turned by the beautiful Miss Fletcher's studied coquettices.

Whether she led the German with him, in all the splendor of full dress and pearl powder, or knelt beside him in St. John's quiet church, confessing her innumerable sins out of her dainty velvet prayer-book, it was all the same; he was hopelessly and irrevocably in love.

He realized it with a bitter pang one sunny May day as they walked together amid the crowd of people which throngs the president's grounds every pleasant Saturday in warm weather. A few belated birds of fashion still lingered in the capital, among them Miss Fletcher and her now never-absent attendant, Bret Durell.

"How I long for a breath of mountain air!" sighed the lady, with a becoming upward glance of her long-lashed eyes from behind an absurdly large fan. "This is our last evening together, and to-morrow—" A suggestive sigh finished the sentence.

"To-morrow to green fields and pastures new," said Durell; "or, in more modern times, to-morrow to fresh flirtations and victims new. Are you sighing like Alexander for more worlds to conquer, Miss Fletcher?"

Miss Fletcher smiled. She was in a gentle twilight mood that day—by the way, "an excellent thing in woman," especially women assured of their own power to please, as Miss Fletcher certainly was.

The smile awoke wonderful dimples in her pink cheeks, and chased the shadows

from her eyes. Durell wondered at these changes, and found the scanning of her face a dangerous study.

"O, I am content with the extent of my dominion now," she laughed. "I have hosts of summer friends, plenty of the good things of this life, and, above all, one true knight to amuse me, although he looks so grave now that his company is not conducive to gayety. A moment ago you were entertained; now you look bored. It is hard to please such fickle creatures as men."

Durell's face did not lighten at her railing. A dark fierce look had sprung up in his eyes, a look which checked the light words on her lips, so unutterably sad and despairing was it.

"I am going to ask you a serious question, Miss Fletcher," he startled her by saying.

She flattered herself that she knew perfectly well what the all-important question would be. So she lowered her sun-umbrella a trifle, and waited with half-averted face and rapidly beating heart for his next words. She loved this man, and meant to accept him; yet she knew full well the value of tormenting uncertainty, and had not heard her worldly brother quote in vain the well-worn lines:

"Your fruit that falls without picking  
Is rather too mellow for me."

Miss Fletcher was a discreet as well as a proud girl, and by not the quiver of an eyelash could Durell read the emotion his few words had awakened.

The silence became embarrassing. He was writing in the sand the word "Faith" with his light cane, and she was following the movement of his hand as if her destiny was being formed with each fantastic letter.

Her sweet well-modulated voice brought him out of dreamland and back to the present.

"I am all attention, Mr. Durell."

"It is a momentous question, Miss Fletcher; one upon which a life's happiness is staked. My query is, What shall a man do if he finds himself engaged to a lady he has entirely ceased to care for? As a man of honor, will he marry her, or would it not be playing a nobler part to confess his faithlessness and be freed from his promise? I state this as the case of a friend of mine who wishes my advice, and

I have come to you for a woman's opinion. Your purer heart and clearer perceptions can surely lead him right."

He ended with an embarrassed laugh, and flushed to the temples as he felt her scornful eyes scanning his face.

She was not blinded by his flimsy deception, and a deathly pallor had spread from forehead to chin of her perfect face.

"A true woman, knowing how utterly a broken engagement ruins a constant girl's life, would tell you there was only one way." She turned her face away from him, striving in vain for her self-possession that had deserted her for the first time in her life. "An honorable man will marry the lady he has compromised by his attentions."

"But has a man any right to marry a woman if he has no love to give her? Would it not be more honorable to confess his utter poverty of affection before it is too late? Would it be possible to keep up a pious fraud after marriage, even if one could deceive during a courtship? A loving woman would be sure to discover the deceit. The fair ones have an intuition as to our feelings towards them. I sometimes think, Miss Fletcher, your sex is only half human, and hold communion with uncanny spirits, I feel so utterly insignificant in your presence."

Miss Fletcher was thinking unutterably bitter things of him just then—was calling him craven and coward in her outraged love; yet to him her face was as calm as a summer's sky, and the cold even voice discussed love with him as if it had been some abstruse subject of science.

"I have not changed my opinion, Mr. Durell. Your *friend*," with a bitter emphasis, "should sacrifice his own happiness for the woman who doubtless loves him better than her own life. You are quite sure she loves him?"

"Quite sure," he replied. He could not falsify with her pure eyes scanning his face.

"Then there is only one way. Your friend must marry her and make her a good husband. If she has no great defects, he will grow to love her in time."

"And live all his life a hypocrite's life, with a smile on his lips, and no love in his heart; give a true woman an unloving husband? He is unloving, and will be to the end of their married life. You are wrong, Miss Fletcher, in assuming that he will

grow to love her. He cannot; he is utterly bankrupt in affection for her. It is only a promise made during a foolish boyhood. She is unsympathetic, childish, and has ceased to answer his wants. He has since met a woman gifted, emotional, faulty, to be sure, yet suited to his nature. One with whom he could be insanely happy, could he be blessed with her love; a woman who appreciates and understands him, and who could make a nobler, better man of him. He feels wedded to her in every thought and feeling, and without her life will be a dreary waste indeed! Yet do you, with all the power of conferring supreme happiness upon him, condemn him to a life of wretchedness and falsehood; a life he detests and abhors? Ah, Faith, such ideas of duty and honor are overstrained. If I were the man you allotted such misery to, would your verdict be the same?"

He was searching her face again, and she knew what his meaning was. The terrible temptation nearly mastered her; then the latent heroism of her nature awoke, and with an effort she whispered:

"She loves you, Mr. Durell. You do not deserve it, but it is some men's fate to have all women bow to them. Do not mock her happiness, too. I see mother with Lieutenant Camden. Good day."

She passed by him, and before he realized it he was alone; utterly and entirely alone, with only the torn fragments of a lost happiness to comfort him.

"I will confess all to Myrtle to-morrow," he murmured. "She, poor child, will release me if I can steal my heart to tell her the truth, and then— No, I will not yet dream of a happiness that must be built upon the ruins of a loving woman's heart. Ah, Durell, you, a so-called man of honor, have proved yourself a villain. Does Faith love me? I think not; yet sometimes I have seen a light in her eyes that only deep emotion could kindle in such a woman's heart. I, a strong man, tremble when I dream of the possibility of a future without her; and yet, six months ago, I was happy in my oyster-like existence, and sneered at worldly belles. Miss Fletcher has taught me that a true woman's heart can beat beneath a fashionable exterior; that it is possible for all feminine loveliness to dwell in a so-styled 'woman of the world.' " \* \* \* \* \*

"Mother, put back the curtains so that I can see the sunset brighten the purple hills. There are apple-blossoms on the window-sill, and the trees are loaded with them. Is it really spring, and is that one of my last year's birds chirping in the garden? The winter is over at last. It has been so long going, and has been so dark and cold. I pray I may never pass such another!"

Myrtle Thorne's patient sigh was echoed by her mother, as, with overflowing eyes, the good lady pretended to busy herself at the open window. With a mother's quick perceptions, she felt that not many, perhaps not one more winter would pass over her darling's head.

She needed not to inquire the reason of her daughter's sadness. It was written too plainly in the girl's pale cheeks, tearful eyes and wasted hands, clasping so tightly a torn letter, dated Nov. 11th; Bret Durell's last, though here was a May sun streaming over the carpet, and a south wind was blowing the apple blossoms into the open window.

"Don't be a dreamin' over that letter any more, daughtly," trying in vain to check the sobs that would choke the words back. "He aint worth thinking about; and I've often told you that now-a-days there aint no sort of dependence to be put in young men. As he used to read of nights about that 'ere crazy Dane, 'they are arrant knaves all, trust none of 'em!' That's what Shakspeare says, and I expect he knew more 'bout human nature than you or me can find out in a lifetime. Come, chirp up and be as gay as other girls be. The doctor says your getting well depends on yourself. See if you can't walk around a bit, and to-morrow father'll take you down in the parlor, and you can sit in your big chair by the window."

"O I can't, mother, I can't!" cried the girl, with sudden pain, pressing her thin fingers to her eyes to hide the fast-flowing tears. "I can't be gay, and I don't want to get well! I know it is wicked, but if Bret don't love me I want to die. I hope God will take me now, and not let me live to see him bring home a wife. I never knew how much I loved him till I thought of that one night; then I prayed so hard that I'd be taken. I am not afraid to die, mother dear; don't cry, or you'll make me sorry, too."

The mother had her daughter in her arms, and was kissing the pale face again and again. Is it any wonder that she almost cursed Durell as she looked upon the wreck of her once blooming little girl, and marked what his neglect had done?

The golden light faded out of the sky, and sombre shadows blackened the hills. The wind had changed, and told of a stormy morrow. Myrtle drew back from the window with a shiver.

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"I wouldn't speculate as to his doings, child. I never liked the idea of his a-marrying you from the first, and God knows best, after all. Durell aint a church member, never speaks in meeting; and some folks do say when he was a boy he didn't walk as straight as he might."

"I don't care how wicked he was, mother," sighed Myrtle, her pretty blue eyes, full of perfect love and trust, looking dreamily out into the twilight. "If I knew he was wicked now I couldn't help loving him!"

"No more than the poor birds can a-help flying into the serpent's mouth," muttered the old lady. "I pray God will root it out of your heart, Myrtle; but I am afeard the mischief is done."

She placed the lamp upon the table before the one window, and its light fell over the lawn out upon the darkening road. Two gentlemen, driving along, noted its appearance, and one remarked, anxiously:

"That's Myrtle's room, doctor. Is it possible she's worse?"

"No telling, Durell. It is a nervous fever that has stuck to her all winter, and the poor child may sink under it. I am

sorry for you, my boy, but it's best to be prepared for the worst."

Durell shaded his eyes with one hand, that his companion, a man whose profession had hardened him to the sorrows of humanity, might not see the great tears that would persist in filling his eyes as he thought of the past. His cruel neglect had dealt Myrtle her deathblow. He felt as certain of it as though the mark of Cain had been visible upon his forehead. No more need to trouble about the future now; death would release him, and he, a self-convicted murderer, would live on to enjoy existence without the poor little girl whose voice had once been the sweetest music in the world to him.

As they drew up before the house a serving-man dashed into the road, and almost ran into the doctor's gig.

"Och doother, are yeers here? Howly virgin be praised, sir! I was jist making for yer shop. The swate little mistress has got the relapse, sir."

"What I feared." And pushing by Durell, the doctor ran towards the house.

An hour later Durell was summoned to the sick room.

"You cannot do any harm now," whispered the doctor in grave tones, "and you may do a world of good. She has been crying and calling your name ever since she was taken."

Durell knelt by the snowy bed and gazed upon the pretty childish face with its transparent skin, fever-flushed cheeks, and framework of tangled gold.

As he took one tiny wasted hand in his own the white lids lifted, and the blue eyes lighted with new life. He gathered her to his arms, and called her endearing names. In that moment all the past of that Washington winter seemed a brilliant dream, and Faith Fletcher's bewitching face ceased to haunt him, as it had for weary days. He was but a man, after all; no better and no worse than the rest of his sex; and with his early love in his arms, all his old tenderness for Myrtle Thorne came back to him. He thought he was honest in his newly-returned love, and flattered himself that he had never, even in thought, been faithless to his word.

That was when Myrtle clasped both tiny hands around his neck and kissed him; not as in days past, when bashfulness would not permit her to betray her love,

but of her own accord; for six months from that May day, with a November rain beating outside the little parlor, Bret Durell spoke the few words that made Myrtle Thorne his wife.

Later, who can tell his thoughts, as day after day he struggled with the love that filled his heart for Faith Fletcher, and endeavored to fill Myrtle's life with every joy? People called him a model husband, and wondered at his only too-evident adoration of his "pale-faced chit of a wife," while he tried in vain to check the pain that would throb in his heart at some chance reference to that long-ago winter, and passed hurriedly by the newspaper items which named her as the reigning belle of fashionable circles in the gay capital. He felt how useless were his struggles, when he noted, among society gossipings, the rumor of her approaching marriage to Lieutenant Camden. He knew then that during his lifetime her dear face would never cease to haunt his memory; that he had "sketched the snake, not killed it."

Much has been said and sung of the beach at Long Branch, but I doubt if any description ever truly depicted the beauty of the place upon a summer's morning—the sparkling, dancing waves, the happy children running hither and thither with their French nurses, and the picturesque-looking bathers preparing for their daily plunge. Surely the life and beauty of the place were enough to make a true lover of nature happy without the artificial pleasures of the hotels.

Myrtle Durell certainly thought so, with a little sigh of content, as she sat in an invalid's chair upon the beach and watched the ever-changing scene. She was somewhat of a student of faces, and flattered herself that she could read characters by physiques, though her husband's heart was still in reality a sealed book to his loving wife, in spite of her constant study of his every change of expression. She had never yet discovered the pious fraud which had blessed her life; and who could have dashed the cup of happiness from her lips by telling her the truth? Surely not her husband, who had studied his part until acting a lie had become a second nature.

"I have been married five years," thought Myrtle; "such happy, happy years!"

I wonder every woman doesn't marry. But no one could get another like *my* husband. That lovely girl who spoke to me the other day is doubtless in love, though she doesn't seem to care for any of her admirers here. I should like to know the happy man she's sighing for; I'd bring them suddenly together, see the sad look leave her eyes, and wind up with a grand wedding."

No one knows to what immense heights these airy castles might have attained had not the subject of them herself demolished them by drawing near the invalid's chair.

"A beautiful day, is it not?"

A commonplace remark enough, but it chased the sorrow from the dark eyes for an instant, and showed Myrtle how beautiful the girl's face was in animation.

"Heavenly; and, like a good invalid, I am out enjoying it. The doctor says this sea-air is all I need to build me up."

The lady looked down at Myrtle's pale face with a pitying glance.

"Confined to that chair, and yet always so patient and cheerful. Tell me, what is the secret of your happiness?"

"A contented mind, my dear, and a perfect husband. I see you smile incredulously, but he is perfect, and seems to return my adoration with interest. We are a model couple. I know you think me a goose!"

She laughed, a happy little laugh, and the lady, with a sigh, turned half away.

"It is odd I have never met this wonder of wonders, a perfect husband; but then, I have only been here three days."

"O, that isn't odd at all. Bret can only spare two days a week for me. I haven't asked your name yet. Mine is Mrs. Durell."

Her listener turned deathly pale, and grew strangely inattentive; but Myrtle, enlarging on her favorite topic of her husband's perfections, never noted.

"As I was saying, he is away a great deal, and lately has been busy raising a subscription for the widows of those poor fishermen who were killed here last week. He is so good. He wasn't always a Christian, you know, but says I have been his good angel, and led him to God. Now he is better, far better than I am, and my only trouble is he keeps growing beyond me in everything! After we were married he had a terrible fever, and the doctor gave him up. Then he would rave about Washing-

ton, going to church, and would talk continually about 'faith.' Mother says she thinks he experienced religion the winter before our marriage; and I know when he got well he joined the church, and is one of the head members now. It made me so very happy, for I couldn't imagine a heaven without him; and mother said unless he was a Presbyterian there was no hope for him."

Her companion smiled in a dreary sort of a way.

Suddenly her chattering ceased. She stopped, with a moan of pain, and lay back in her chair pale as death.

The lady stooped over her and called loudly for help. Bret Durell, who had left the hotel, had caught sight of his wife, and was beside her chair in an instant.

"My poor darling! Myrtle, look up. It frightens me to see these fainting spells."

"Is your wife subject to them?"

He turned suddenly at sound of her voice, that clear sweet voice that seemed an echo of his happy past. The blood mounted to his temples, but with an effort he mastered his emotion.

"She has been an invalid for years."

That was all that passed between them. She left him abruptly, as she had left him once before; and he, to do him justice, after the first wild pain of meeting her had passed, thought only of his wife. She claimed his pity, and, in truth, held a large portion of his heart.

Men love best, declare to the contrary as they may, these simple clinging women who look up to and worship them. It is pleasant for one of the lords of creation to find himself suddenly idealized into a deity, with some fond woman to constantly kneel and adore before the shrine of his greatness. He cannot sustain the character of a lover for a great length of time. Pygmalion would soon have wearied of his statue had she remained a statue; and no doubt after she had been endued with life he treated her much as other men treat their wives, and by humblest adoration for her creator she more than repaid him for the doubtful advantage of introducing her to the bittersweet of this life.

Bret Durell had not been insensible to his wife's devotion to himself, and his self-imposed task had grown easier as the months had passed away.

Wheeled before the hotel window, where

she could watch the moonlight wash the beach, with Durell's arms clasped close around her, her last words blessed his life with a knowledge that he had done what he could.

"How blissful these few years have been, darling! You have made me so happy, Bret, I can't bear to think of heaven without you. Don't cry. God knows best, but I hope he won't let all the brightness leave your life with me. I have prayed and prayed so many nights of late that some great happiness will dawn for you with my death. It mustn't make you very sad, my darling, to lose me. I have only been a burden and trouble to you."

"No, no, Myrtle," with choking voice. "God knows the desire to make you happy has been the one object of my life. Your love has blessed me more than I deserve. What have I done to win such a woman's devotion? You have made me very happy."

And such are the inconsistencies of our natures that, with the softening influences of that solemn hour upon him, he thought that he spoke the truth to his dying wife!

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Two years later Bret Durell again finds himself in Washington. He wanders listlessly up and down the long parlors of the "Arlington," glancing curiously now and then at a lady, the only occupant of a small side room. Her back is towards him as she softly touches the keys of a sweet-toned piano; and she evidently thinks herself alone, for soon her voice accompanies the weird music. Every word seems laden with a tear as he listens.

"O ceaseless cravings never hushed to rest!  
O withered hopes that haunt the lonely breast!  
Fulfilled will these vague longings ever be,  
Or resurrected joys return to me?"

"After the long watch of the dreary night  
Shall golden dawn e'er greet my heavy sight?  
After the silence of a loving tomb  
Shall sweetest music ever pierce my gloom?"

He knows the clear rich voice at once, and as she sings a great change passes over the dark cynical features.

"Faith?"

The warm color flushes face and throat

as she recognizes him in the dim light, and holds out both hands in glad welcome.

There are no reproaches or explanations between them. They love too entirely to need either; the past and all its bitterness for one moment is forgotten.

She sits before him with bowed head, and he gazes down upon her with all the old love, that he dared not tell her years before, surging in his heart. The silence is unbroken save for the rustling of a sheet of music Miss Fletcher nervously rolls and unrolls in both white hands. Separation and time have wrought changes in both, and neither can at once leap the impalpable gulf between them. They feel how impossible it is to take up the thread of their romance just where they left it seven years before. These years have made them wiser and more fearful of the future.

Durell knows that he must speak the words that will separate their lives forever or bind them more closely together.

Some musicians have paused beneath the open window, and the strains of the "Blue Danube" float out upon the sultry air. Their eyes meet, and hers are full of tears.

"It was that first meeting, Faith, that caused my sin. I was weak, and by that weakness wrecked my life, and, worse than that, rendered the best years of yours unhappy. If you knew how impossible it was for me to banish myself from your presence, you would not blame me, even though I had no right to love you in those days. Since, I have tried to atone for the past, but I often doubt if I did wisely in following your advice. Faith, can you forgive me, and love me a little in spite of my folly?"

She is but a woman, and in her great joy forgets the wrong he has done her. She feels fully repaid for the sacrifice she made of her life's happiness seven years before; and as she raises the hand she is caressing to her lips, she seems to see an angel's face smiling kindly upon them.

Surely Myrtle's prayer has been answered, and a great happiness has indeed dawned for her husband with her death. Who can say whether the deception that blessed her short life were right or wrong?

# APRIL WEATHER.

Beebe, Carrie D

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pg. 380

## APRIL WEATHER.

BY CARRIE D. BEEBE.

We always called her April, though her real name was May. She was the youngest of three daughters, and a generous warm-hearted girl. But, as a rule, she would always cry when she ought to laugh, and laugh when other people about her were disposed to cry, or at least, to look solemn. Her sisters, Ethel and Lou, were far prettier than April; they were accomplished and engaging, and all that, but notwithstanding this, April was the belle of the family.

Nobody could tell why. Ethel was a finished musician; Lou was a beautiful singer; April was neither, yet she won more attention in society than either of her sisters.

Their father, Mr. Edgerton, was a wealthy merchant of New York, and spent the greater portion of his time attending to his business, scarcely ever appearing in society. His wife, on the contrary, was socially inclined, and quite a leader in the circle in which she moved. Their residence in the city was very elegant, and they also possessed a pretty house in the country, where the family spent their summers, usually entertaining a number of guests, making the place both lively and attractive.

It was early in June, and they had been established for a week only in their country house. The domestic machinery of the domicile was beginning to run smoothly, and visitors were commencing to arrive, only ladies, as yet; but on this evening four gentlemen were expected who were to remain for three or four days. Ethel and Lou were busy preparing for the evening, for they were to have music and dancing on the wide porch.

"I," said Ethel, after inspecting half a dozen dresses of different hue and texture, "think I'll wear pink, with daisies and forget-me-nots. Please, April, close the door after you!" she added, as her sister dashed in, hat in hand. "I do wish, my dear, you could be less abrupt in manner. You keep my nerves dancing, until I'm all tired out when evening comes."

"Never mind your nerves, Ethel," in-

terrupted Lou, "but tell me what I shall wear to-night."

"Blue, of course," returned Ethel, "with pink roses. April dear, sit down a moment, and let us consider what is best for you. Now I think—"

"Mustard-green, with sunflowers," April chimed in, tying on her hat before the mirror.

Ethel held up her pretty hands with a gesture of dismay.

"Or, on second thought," continued April, disappearing in the closet, her voice half smothered in dress skirts and other clothing, "I believe I'll try the effect of corn-color and 'daffy-down-dillies.' That would certainly appear original, and I do not doubt would attract more attention than your pink with daisies, and Lou's blue with roses. A pleasing contrast, too, girls; we'd make excellent foils—"

"Where in the world are you going?" asked Lou, as April emerged from the closet, satchel in hand.

"To cry."

And by way of emphasis, she took from her drawer four clean pocket-handkerchiefs, and began to sprinkle them with violet perfume.

"O April, you are enough to try the temper of a saint!" exclaimed Ethel. "Here it is three o'clock, and the gentlemen expected at five. How will you look, you dreadful girl, with your eyelids swollen, your nose red, and your complexion the color of—I don't know what?"

"How can I help it, girls? I haven't cried for a week. I've been as hard-hearted as either of you ever since we came out in the country. If you do succeed in keeping me from it now, I shall burst right out before the company this evening; so you had better let me take my own time for it."

She took out a piece of embroidery and a tiny gold thimble from her workbox, and placed them in the satchel.

"You're going to sew while you cry, I suppose," said Lou, "and so lose no time with your grief."

"Certainly, if I feel like it. I may just

as well take a few stitches while the people gather, like the old lady at her husband's funeral." And taking up a volume of poems, she threw that in the satchel also.

"For pity's sake, April," cried Ethel, "don't take my Enoch Arden, if you're going to cry over it. I've scarcely a blue and gold volume left that isn't blotted with your tears. Couldn't you get an old book and have it to use whenever you feel a lachrymose fit coming on?"

"Now, girls, you may abuse me as much as you like," returned April, quietly. "It only makes me feel all the more like having an awful cry. Not merely an April dash, but a regular storm."

"Commence as soon as you can, my dear," said Ethel, resignedly. "I suppose we must make up our minds to always have April weather, no matter what the season may be."

She turned to arrange the flowers upon her dress; and April, satchel in hand, set out for the fields. Only a short distance from the house was a small stream which seemed, in its windings, almost as capricious as April herself. Now it flowed smoothly on, then it suddenly got up the most wonderful commotion possible, over a bed of rocks. Then it indulged in a sudden waterfall, and a little further on spread out in a broad still sheet of water, a miniature lake. This little lake was nearly surrounded with rocks and trees of various sizes, and was quite a retreat for visitors at the house on summer afternoons.

This afternoon, however, April found it deserted, as the ladies were all engaged in preparing for the evening. So she sat down upon a rock which was partially covered with moss, and bordered by ferns. Here she sat down, and began to think over her grievances. Very soon, without help of book or embroidery, her tears began to flow. One handkerchief drenched, and she took up another. She was just about to commence upon the third, when she heard a noise like a brittle stick or twig breaking under a person's foot.

It did not startle her, for she fancied it was either a dog, or perhaps one of her sisters who had followed her. But her cry was evidently at its close. The spell was broken, the fount dry. She cast a lugubrious glance toward the opposite margin of the lake, and there, mirrored in the

clear water, she saw the face of a man. April, notwithstanding her variable moods, was not easily frightened. She knew at once it could not be the face of a neighbor, for it had the unmistakable air of a gentleman who was accustomed to the ways of the city. It was a rather handsome face too; clear eyes, good forehead, rather long nose, and a blonde mustache, curled up at the ends as though the mouth it hid were smiling.

It was not a face to frighten any one. As to the form, it was hidden behind the bushes, as though its owner preferred to remain unseen. In a moment April had taken in and comprehended the whole situation. It was one of the gentlemen they were expecting from the city; and, as she was acquainted with three of them, this was, without doubt, the fourth, Bent Barclay, one of Ethel's friends.

Without stopping to think that in all probability the man had accidentally happened to come to the place, April grew angry in a moment.

"Such impudence!" she mentally exclaimed. "I wonder if he never saw any one cry before? It is a pity for me to stop until he's had a good view. I'll make an awful face, at any rate, and make him believe I'm crying, even if I can't bring another tear."

It was of no avail, however. She felt more like laughing than crying; and, giving up at the second trial, she dipped the pocket-handkerchief in hand in the water, and bathed her face, fanning herself with her hat as coolly as though she was not aware of the mischievous eyes bent upon her.

"After all," she said, to herself, "I suppose I did present a comical spectacle, with my two handkerchiefs spread out upon the rock to dry, and I still crying for dear life. I've just one mind to be angry, and two to forgive him."

While she was considering the matter, she was startled by a sudden exclamation upon the part of the gentleman; and turning suddenly, she saw that the twig he had been holding for support, as he leaned forward, had suddenly given way, and he was precipitated into the water. He did not lose his footing, however, but stood upright, with the water about to his knees, the most comical look imaginable upon his face.

April laughed until she came very near falling into the lake herself.

"It serves you right," she said, between her peals of laughter. "You should never act as a spy, unless you expect to be punished."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Edgerton," he replied, laughing in turn. "My name is Barclay, and I am a guest at your father's house. I assure you I did not mean to be rude. I followed the stream until I saw you, and then paused a moment, I acknowledge."

"I know it," she answered, coolly, "for I saw you."

At this moment his Panama hat, which dropped from his head when he fell from the bank, floated near the rock where April stood, and she picked it up quietly.

"Are you going to remain in the water the rest of the day?" asked April, roguishly. "If you'll wade up here, I'll fish you out as I did your hat."

"Thank you. I believe I'll accept your kind offer." And wading coolly up to where she stood, he put out his hand toward her.

She blushed, but gave him her hand, and he sprang quickly upon the rock.

"I think," she said, "we had better both go home." And she glanced at the water dripping from his clothing over his boots.

"I think we had," looking into her face, which was still flushed with her recent tears, and the handkerchiefs spread out upon the rock.

April gathered them up without a word, and put them in her satchel.

"I assure you," said he, "I deeply sympathize with the grief, whatever it may have been, which caused your tears to flow so freely."

"I know it," she answered. "I saw your tears falling like spring rain, while you stood poised upon one foot and peering through the shrub-oaks at me; and I am very grateful to you for the sympathy you betrayed. Still, I assure you it was entirely unnecessary. I never mope around, but when I have a certain number of trials, I go off and have a hearty cry, and then dismiss them altogether. Sometimes I cry five minutes, and sometimes nearly an hour. It don't harm me, but is a kind of relief, like taking a drink of water when I feel thirsty."

In the meantime, Ethel and Lou, surrounded by their guests, were holding an animated conversation out on the porch. Ethel took out her watch, and seeing that it was almost dinner-time, groaned inwardly at April's prolonged absence. Just then she looked up and saw April walking leisurely toward the house, and Bent Barclay carrying her satchel. One glance at her sister's face convinced her that April had been having her awful cry, without doubt. She did not speak of it, however, but informed April that she had only ten minutes to dress for dinner.

"Dress is of but little consequence to a heroine," returned April. "You ought to congratulate yourself, my dear, on having such a brave sister. This gentleman," pointing to Bent, "accidentally fell into the lake, and I plunged in and rescued him."

"Without soiling the hem of your garment?" said Ethel, dubiously.

"Certainly. That is the heroic part of the performance."

She went up to her room, and the gentlemen crowded around Bent to learn the particulars of his accident. When dinner was announced, April failed to make her appearance. Bent had hastily made the necessary change in his clothing; and when they were all seated at the table, Mrs. Edgerton sent a servant up stairs to inform April that they were waiting. The messenger soon appeared.

"Is Miss April coming?" asked Mrs. Edgerton, rather sternly.

"Hardly, mem," said the girl, hesitatingly. "I found her fast asleep mem, and I wouldn't waken her."

Mrs. Edgerton frowned, Ethel's face was dyed with blushes, and Lou said:

"It is of no use, mamma, to try to make anything but a child out of April."

Mrs. Edgerton changed the subject, and the dinner progressed without further delay. When it was finished, the ladies retired to their rooms, and the gentlemen went out upon the porch for a smoke.

April was still fast asleep when her sisters came up stairs. Before they were dressed for the evening, however, she woke, and after running down to the pantry to appease her hunger, she hastily arranged her hair, and donning a dress of puffed white tulle dotted with knots of white ribbon, she put on, by way of ornament the

best of what her two sisters had left, discussing her looks and their actions as she did so.

"My cheeks are blazing to-night, it's lucky I put on all white. Where in the world is my pearl bracelet? Lou took it, of course. I'll wear her chain and Ethel's ruby cross if I can find them. Yes. Here they are! Now that's very well, only I ought to have some flowers in my hair. Those girls might have helped me dress. They haven't left me a solitary flower fit to wear. I wonder if Lou isn't slightly smitten with Bent Barclay? She looked as though she could bite my head off when I came home with him, before dinner. I must try and get out in the garden, and find a few flowers for my dress and hair. I do hope the guests are in the parlor, where they belong."

She peeped over the banisters; no one was in the hall. Some of the ladies were singing in the parlor, so she started softly down the staircase. She had taken but a step or two, when Mr. Barclay appeared, and came up the stairs. April stepped back.

"Good-evening," he said. "Have you had a good sleep, and are you ready to go down?"

"I am ready all but a few flowers. I could not find one fit to wear, and I forgot to bring them from the garden before it was dark."

"And you want me to gather you some?" he asked, with a smile, thinking how pretty and inviting her lips were.

"Yes," hesitatingly. "At least I had not thought of it; but if you would be so kind, I'd thank you very much."

"What color shall I bring?"

"White or red, but no others."

"If you will wait for me here, I'll bring them in a moment."

He soon returned, and April took the flowers from his hands.

"Coral-flower," she said; "very pretty. Rosebuds, pure white. The very thing I wanted. Thank you very much, Mr. Barclay;" and she ran into her room to arrange them.

When she appeared again, he was still waiting in the hall. She tripped down the staircase; he followed, and they entered the parlor together. Lou soon captured him to sing with her. Both had fine voices, and they sang two or three songs with good effect. In looking over the music Mr.

Barclay came to a song which he greatly admired.

"Sing this, please, Miss Edgerton," he said.

"I cannot," she replied. "It is one of April's songs."

"I did not know your sister sang."

"I only sing for myself," April replied. "I never sing before company."

She answered in a manner which plainly showed she did not wish to sing, and Mr. Barclay forbore to urge her. But Mrs. Edgerton, who was always rather stern with April, and especially displeased with her conduct in the afternoon, said:

"April, that is all nonsense. You are old enough to sing in company, and you have a good voice, though of course it is not so fine as your sister's. It is my desire that you sing that song."

"Now, mamma?" asked April, her eyes growing larger and larger, and her hands beginning to tremble.

"Now!" repeated Mrs. Edgerton, sternly.

If April had been told that she was to be burned at the stake she could not have looked more terrified. She sat down at the piano, and glanced up to where Mr. Barclay stood, with the music in his hand.

"I cannot sing it," she said to him, almost in a whisper, and choking down a half-sob.

His eyes were flashing ominously; but they changed in an instant when she spoke to him.

"I'll help you," he answered, reassuringly, in the same low tone.

"But I cannot, for I have no voice to-night." And she looked so pretty and so frightened, that Bent, who had been wavering ever since he saw her, now lost his heart altogether.

"Then you shall not." Softly, to her. "Mrs. Edgerton," he said, in a louder tone. "I have made a mistake. "This is a horrible song, and I really believe it would make my head ache to hear it."

Mrs. Edgerton laughed in spite of her efforts to look grave, and the company felt relieved.

"Under the circumstances," she replied, "I think we must excuse April from singing the song."

April gave Bent one look of thanks, and then rushed from the piano in unladylike haste.

From that night, Bent was all devotion

to April. He did not seek to disguise the fact, but was her champion in all her battles, and they were not a few. One day when he came in the parlor, and found her alone at the piano, he said:

"April, I want very much to hear you sing that song."

"O no!" perversely.

"O yes!" coaxingly. "Come, it's April weather I like, not March winds always. And then I'll help you."

Thus adjured, April sang the song. And when she had finished (for there was no one near), Bent took her face in his hands and kissed it, and told her the old story his father had told his own mother before him; but it was new to April, and she thought it the very sweetest story she had ever heard.

Mrs. Edgerton smiled benignly upon Bent when he informed her of the result

of this little interview. Ethel was pleased, and Lou indifferent, to all outward appearance.

"You two will lead a sad life of it," she proclaimed, warningly.

"But he is fond of April weather," said Ethel, smiling.

"Nonsense!" returned Lou; "we have had nothing but May sunshine ever since he came."

The tears came into April's eyes, and she rose hastily and ran out of the room. Bent followed, in time to kiss away her tears before they fell.

"No matter, my darling," he said. "March, April or May weather, you are the dearest little girl in the world to me; and I wouldn't have you changed from the impulsive, warm-hearted little April you are, for anything the world could give me."

## ASHORE IN HAVANA:

—OR,—

### A TASTE OF SPANISH LAW.

BY M. QUAD, OF THE MICHIGAN PRESS.

TWENTY years ago, when I was a sailor before the mast, I did not fear man, beast or devil. I do not mean by this that I possessed extraordinary courage, and that nothing could have startled me; but I mean that I was bold to speak out my thoughts, and that I would say things and do things without stopping to count consequences. One having such a nature is to be condoled with, for as fast as he is out of one scrape his tongue will get him into another. Some pretty severe experiences have developed my bump of caution, and made me more prudent.

One spring I had a comfortable berth in the Nonpareil, a handsome little schooner engaged in the fruit trade between New York and Havana. The pay was good, trips short, and there was but little work for the crew. While lying in Havana the sailors were allowed to wander at will, and there was not a nook in the old town which we did not explore. Americans always have been and always will be cordially hated by the Spanish in Cuba, and as we prowled around the town we made no friends, except with the shopkeepers, who wanted our dollars.

One afternoon, not far from the quay, as three or four of us were returning to the ship, singing songs and feeling in jolly humor, I happened to jostle a Spaniard off the narrow walk. It was purely accidental; I was looking another way at the time, and did not even see him until the collision came. The fellow uttered an oath and whipped out his knife, and before any of us really understood what he meant, he made a cut at me, inflicting a slight wound in my left shoulder. Before he could deliver another blow he was knocked down, his knife wrenched away, and he got pretty badly used, though no worse than he deserved. The crowd which gathered sought to arrest us, but we fought our way through to the schooner and escaped them. I expected they would come on board and ar-

rest us by civil process, but the matter blew over for some cause, probably because the Spaniard did not make a complaint and ask a warrant, preferring to seek personal revenge.

"It wont be healthy for you lads to go ashore again!" said Captain Rocket that evening. "That fellow will stick a knife into you the first opportunity, and the police will seize the slightest pretext to arrest and jail you."

"Suppose they do?" I inquired.

"We wont suppose any such thing," he replied; "if you've got common sense you'll take my advice. If you get into Havana jail there's no knowing when you would get out."

We all felt a little piqued at the captain's idea that we couldn't take care of ourselves, and we made it up between us to go on shore that very night and rub our elbows against the police.

"I'd like to see 'em lugging us off to jail without a fair square trial!" said Capstan.

"It will be a sad hour when they try it on!" added Gunwale.

So it was agreed that we three should make believe that we had turned in for the night, and then when the old man had become quiet we would steal ashore and have a lark. He was out of the way before ten o'clock, and shortly after that hour we left the ship and started up town, armed with our knives, plenty of money in our pockets, and just aching for a muss.

The streets were full of people, the shops all open, and we went about with free step. Some of the native Cubans were polite and courteous, but the Spaniards greeted us with scowls and muttered curses, and it was evident that if we happened to run across four or five of the sulky fellows in a body there would be a fuss. We drank here and there at the cafes, sang songs for the amusement of the crowds therin congregated, and at

length became quite noisy. It was a wonder that the police did not at least admonish us to be quiet; but though we constantly encountered them, they had neither word nor gesture.

About eleven o'clock we entered a large cafe in which about twenty men sat smoking and drinking. Most of them were Spaniards, and they showed their contempt for us by refusing to note our entrance. We sat down at a table and called for wine, and as we sat sipping it and listening to the pleasing music of a harp which was being played at the rear end of the cafe, a girl about fifteen years old entered the door with a basket of cigars.

We purchased a handful, and perhaps it was for this reason that not another man in the cafe would purchase. The girl passed from one to the other, but some shook their heads, and others growled out that they did not wish for her goods. She happened to pass her basket a second time to one of the fellows, and with a muttered curse he snatched it from her hand and tossed it across the room, the cigars flying in every direction.

"A man who will do that is a lowbred dog!" shouted Capstan, leaping to his feet.

"And I'm the party who can double-reef his mainsail," added Gunwale.

Every man was on his feet in a moment, and the Spaniard who had kicked the basket came over to Capstan, and said in broken English:

"Is it any of your business? Perhaps you wish to take the beggar's part?"

"Perhaps I do!" shouted Capstan. And he drew back and struck the fellow a tremendous blow between the eyes, knocking him clear over one of the tables.

Next moment they were striking at us with fists, chairs and knives. We tacked ship a little, so as to get our backs to the walls, and then, each armed with a stool, we gave them as good as they sent, and perhaps a little better.

"Put your knives into the Yankee devils!" shouted those behind to those in front; but they couldn't get near enough. It would have done an Irishman's heart good to have seen the way we cracked Spanish heads for about five minutes, or until the police came. Now, it was our plain duty to surrender to the three police officials who came in, and we had done so

when the conduct of one of them brought on a new fracas. We had put our shattered stools down in obedience to orders, when one of the officers hauled off and gave Gunwale a heavy blow on the neck. There was no provocation, and the act fired us again.

"Clean out the cafe!" roared Capstan. And we went to work to do it, and did do it, not even leaving the bar-tender behind.

You can imagine that there was a good deal of excitement and a great crowd. The fight had only ended when a captain marched a dozen soldiers into the room, and we were ordered to surrender. As soon as they made us prisoners they put on the handcuffs, though we were ready to go peaceably, and on the way to prison the crowd were allowed to pelt us with stones and exercise on us with their boots.

We were pretty badly used up when we reached the prison, and were glad enough to get behind the bars and escape the crowd. Instead of being placed in the corridor with other prisoners who had committed some breach of the peace, and were waiting for trial in the morning, we were each assigned a cell, and then a soldier was set to pace up and down in front of the barred and bolted doors. All three of us were rather boozy, and in a short time after being locked up we dropped off to sleep.

Next morning, when the other prisoners were marched out, we wondered that we did not go with them; and when the sentinel was appealed to, he merely shook his head, and went on pacing up and down.

"I don't know, boys, but what we have got into a bad scrape!" yelled Capstan; "but when they take us out we must stick up for our rights, and not take a bluff even from the judge. It looks as if they were going to make some serious charge against us."

We felt a little blue in spite of all our efforts, and I for one wished that we had given heed to the captain's warning. I was aware that we had hurt some of the men in the cafe quite severely, and there was no telling what sort of a charge they would bring. However, we were to know before night. About two o'clock in the afternoon we were taken out, shackled together and conducted into a crowded courtroom, and seated in the prisoners' box.

I saw two judges, five or six lawyers, a

big crowd, and everything looked as if the trial was going to be one of unusual importance. In a little time we were ordered to stand up, and the judges stated that we were charged with assault with intent to rob, and assault with intent to murder Blank, and Blank, and Blank, he reading a list of thirteen names! There were thus thirteen double charges against each one of us, and serious charges, too. An interpreter translated as the judge read, and when we were asked to plead we pleaded "not guilty."

"This is a devil of a row," said Capstan, as we consulted together; "what are we going to do?"

"Send for the captain and the American consul," replied Gunwale; and we decided to do so.

"Prisoners, have you counsel?" inquired the judge, after hearing our plea of "not guilty."

"We have none," I answered; "and we desire the presence of the American consul."

"He is not in the city," answered the dignitary; and I learned afterward that such was the case, the consul having gone to the other end of the island on a private excursion.

"Then send for Captain Rocket of the schooner Nonpareil," I continued.

"He sailed for New York this morning," was the answer.

I believed this to be a lie at the time, and I afterwards found it so. The schooner was yet at the quay, not half loaded, and Captain Rocket had in some way been given the impression that we had gone into the interior. As he did not intend to sail for three days yet, he felt no uneasiness or alarm, thinking we would return as soon as we had finished our lark.

"I shall assign you counsel," continued the judge, as we three conferred together; and a sleek-looking lawyer, who could speak pretty good English, came over to us. We had no money, having been robbed by the soldiers, and of course the lawyer had no interest in trying to clear us. In fact, he discouraged us at the outset, saying:

"It is a very serious affair; they must convict you."

The parties named in the complaint were the men who had fought us in the cafe, of course, and also included the fellow with whom we had the fuss in the afternoon

near the quay. They took the stand one after another, heads bound up or arms in slings, and they all swore to an infernal falsehood. They agreed that we entered the cafe, locked the door and demanded their purses; and that when they refused we drew our knives and rushed upon them.

Our lawyer refused to cross-examine a single witness, and when the captain went to *handle one of them* the judge ordered him to be silent. The trial lasted about three hours, and the result was conviction on each and every charge. But there were extenuating circumstances, we were surprised to hear the judge remark. We were strangers, unused to the laws of Cuba, and in sentencing us he would remember this. He then sentenced each one of us in turn to eighteen years imprisonment in the Island State Penitentiary; but during the first six months of the first year we were to go on to a chain gang with others, and work on *one of the government highways*!

"See here, you old Malay!" commenced Capstan, springing up; but the judge ordered him to sit down.

"Tar my buttons if I do!" replied the sailor, maintaining his feet. "I'm a free man, whether this is a free country or not, and I'm going to make a speech! We haven't had a fair trial, and we are not going to prison till we do have! We want the American consul, we want our captain, we want a lawyer, and we want witnesses! We can prove that those witnesses are liars, and that they have perjured themselves!"

"Sit down! Sit down!" called the judge.

"I'm cussed if I do!" replied Capstan, warming up to his work. "We are American citizens, and you'd better beware how you imprison us! You want to understand that we represent a country of twenty-four million people, with a government which will demand the amplest satisfaction for any injury to us! If there are charges against us, I demand that our trial be postponed until the return of the consul."

But it was Yankee eloquence thrown away. The judge ordered us removed, and we were returned to prison. Capstan felt quite sanguine that a postponement had been secured by his speech, but such was not the case. We had scarcely em-

tered the prison when we were ordered to exchange our clothing for the dress of convicts. We were all in the corridor together, and we stood out about it until a file of soldiers entered, and then we had to give in.

"Never mind," said Capstan, as we surveyed each other after donning the prison dress; "Captain Rocket will of course hear of this, and take steps to have us released."

It did seem as if he would do something, and we grew more hopeful, trusting that he would learn of the affair and commence his proceedings before we were taken out to serve on the chain-gang.

About dusk the jailor brought in some coarse food and a pitcher of water, and we were hardly through eating when the file of soldiers entered again. The three of us were handcuffed together, and in a few minutes we knew that they intended to start us off that night, for fear that some of our friends might discover our situation and take steps in our behalf. There was no use resisting, for we were helpless, and the soldiers looked as if they would care for no better fun than to prick us with their bayonets. I learned afterwards that not a line of the proceedings was published in the Havana papers, not even the circumstance of arrest being recorded.

As soon as getting outside the jail building, we were ordered into a cart drawn by two mules, two soldiers got in to guard us, and away we went for the country. The government was then constructing several roads into the interior, using convict labor altogether, and the contractor to whom we were assigned was engaged on a road about twelve miles from the city, on the seashore.

We arrived at our destination without incident, and after being received by the contractor, and our names and descriptions recorded, were sent to the convict camp. The camp was in a field near the road, and occupied about an acre of ground, there being a tent to every three men. The convicts were furnished rations, fuel and cooking utensils, and cooked their own food. The rations consisted of flour, rice, meat and beans, all more or less damaged, and most of the meat so bad that it had to be thrown away. We were the only foreigners among the prisoners, and they were much surprised to see us there. The

three of us were assigned to one tent, and as soon as entering camp had ball and chain attached to our right legs. The balls were so heavy that they had to be picked up when one wanted to move off, and the bands around our ankles were so roughly put on that they chafed and galled severely. A squad of eighteen soldiers were on duty around the camp, and such a thing as escape seemed out of the question.

Gunwale and myself were very despondent, but Capstan declared that the consul or Captain Rocket would put in an appearance inside of three days, and he dwelt with satisfaction on the idea of an apology from the governor-general in person.

Next morning we were taken out and put to work breaking stone, and when night came we were about as sore and lame as men could be. It would have been folly to refuse, as the contractor would have been justified in resorting to the severest punishment to enforce obedience, and he had power to carry out any design. We went out again next day, and the next, and in fact the expiration of the month found us at the same work. We had given up hopes of being restored to liberty by the consul or the captain, and had commenced to think of escape. Our conduct had been uniformly good; we had worked faithfully and well, and the contractor had noticed it, giving us each a word of praise. We saw that those who were industrious and respectful were best treated and allowed the most privileges, and had acted accordingly.

When we had been on the chain twenty-nine days we moved thirteen miles down the coast, near a small port called Callo, for the purpose of constructing a road across a piece of marshy ground, or rather straightening the old highway, and saving a long bend in the road. The roadbed was to be of gravel, and the gravel had to be got on the seashore, and wheeled or carted a distance of forty rods before being dumped. There were three carts drawn by mules, and ten or twelve wheelbarrows, and Capstan, Gunwale and myself were ordered to drive the carts, this being the lightest work, and given to us as a reward for our good behaviour.

We had been at work five days when Capstan broached a plan of escape. Every day quite a number of people had come up

from the town in sail or rowboats to see us work, and it had frequently happened that their boats were left unguarded as the people strolled along the beach. The plan was to make a dash for one of these boats, get her off, and take our chances of being shot or recaptured. Ours was a desperate case, and we agreed to the plan, but it was four days more before the opportunity came. A sail-craft containing ten persons and spreading a fine show of canvas came up on the afternoon of that day, and as soon as Capstan put his eyes on her, warned us that we must not let the opportunity pass.

The beach was quite bold where the party landed, and the boat was run close to the bank and her anchor thrown into the sand. There was a breeze off shore, and her sails were left up, booms swinging to and fro, and the cable hauled taut. The boat was not over thirty feet from where our carts were loaded, and when we saw her left to herself, our plan was fully matured. We had to work a full hour to break up the order in which the carts were being driven, so as to have all three arrive at the beach at once; and when we were on the point of accomplishing this, the people who had come up in the boat could be seen coming up the beach to go aboard.

Capstan's cart was loaded, mine loading, and Gunwale was just driving up, when we seized our iron balls, leaped down and made the rush. No one was prepared for such a move on our part. The laborers were between us and the nearest soldiers, and we had boarded the boat and shoved off before there was a yell of alarm.

Seizing the oars in the boat, we shoved off, and as her head began to swing round the soldiers opened fire. They were so near and so well-armed that we should assuredly have been shot down but for a singular circumstance. A baby, about a year old, belonging to one of the women, had been left on a thwart asleep, and Capstan picked it up and tossed it overboard. The convicts were shouting, the soldiers running, and the people coming up as fast as they could; and between one thing and another, we began to get out of range. A soldier threw down his musket to leap in and save the child, and before he had returned to the beach with it we were out of range. There was no other boat nearer than the town, and they could make no pursuit. We stood out to sea until dark, and then, running down off Havana, were fortunate enough to speak an English brig just starting for London, and were readily taken aboard.

## BEYOND THE PICKET LINES:

— OR, —

### THE ARMY REMINISCENCES OF CAPTAIN JACK.

BY M. QUAD, OF THE MICHIGAN PRESS.

#### MY FRIEND THE BLOODHOUND.

WHEN Grant and his staff arrived at Bridgeport, on the Tennessee, going to the relief of Thomas's army, which had been "bottled up" in Chattanooga for weeks, I had been waiting there two days, having been ordered to report to the general's adjutant in person. I reported, was recognized, and went into Chattanooga with the party, getting an inkling on the way up of what was expected of me.

I never saw such sights of misery as I witnessed in the town, which had for two or three weeks been spoken of by the press as the doomed city. The men had been on rations for a long time, many of the horses had literally starved to death, the soldiers were ragged and unkempt, and the hospitals had more patients than could be cared for. On the crest of Lookout Mountain, on every hill, on the lowland, scarce half a mile from the business streets, Bragg's soldiers could be seen moving about, and Bragg's earthworks rose up higher and stronger. His lines reached from a point on the river above the town to a point on the river below, forming a half circle. He held the railroad, the river, the highways, and Thomas could not have abandoned the town, even if the brave old general ever entertained such an idea. The Unionists had thrown up some earthworks around the city, but nothing formidable, and so far as I could learn from officers, the "cooped up" were daily expecting the assault which must have resulted in an unconditional surrender. But Bragg was waiting to starve them out. He had cut off every avenue, except one mountain road, by which supplies could be brought in, and he knew that what came over that road would not keep a hundred men on full rations.

I spent a day and a half lounging around the city, and trying to get acquainted with the Confederate positions. I expected to be called on shortly to make an excursion among the Confederates, and lost no op-

portunity of conversing with those who could post me about the roads, pickets, streams, etc. Therefore, when I received the order, I was ready for it.

I was commanded to penetrate Bragg's line at any point I could, but to make a complete survey of Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Lookout Valley, and travel from one end of his army to the other. After ascertaining that no one person could perform the feat within four days, if allowed to pursue his investigations uninterrupted, the adjutant concluded to divide the work between three of us. I drew a map of the ground, and portioned off the work, two spies living in the city taking their orders from me. Lookout Mountain and the valley were reserved for my own operations, the two men being given the enemy's right flank and Missionary Ridge. I had nothing to do with the strangers further than to give them a send-off, as they were old residents of the neighborhood, and had their own plans about getting in and out of the city.

As I was to go out that night, I began my preparations at once. West of the town, between three and four miles, was Lookout Mountain, its peak almost touching the sky, and its sides like a precipice. Between the mountain and the town was the valley, a railroad running through it, a farmhouse here and there, a creek winding down along the centre, and the ground held by the pickets of the two armies. The lines of investment were so closely drawn, and the enemy were so vigilant, that there was not the least hope for a scout, and so I was forced to go out once more as a spy. I could go as a deserter, as an officer, as a citizen. Just before dark, with my mind still undetermined, I stumbled across a man in front of one of the hotels who was higgling with a soldier about the purchase of a pipe, which, instead of a stem, had a small rubber pipe about four feet long attached, the rubber having an amber mouthpiece at the end.

The man had a dozen new style canteens, a supply of pocket-knives, envelops and stationery, and was exactly the chap I wanted to see. When I began questioning him, and endeavored to make a bargain for his goods, he grew frightened, and acted so confused, that I called a couple of the soldier patrol, and had him taken to the guardhouse as a spy. When I charged him with that offence, he gave his name as Samuel Green, stated that he had lived at Bridgeport, and did not deny that he had sold his goods to both armies. A thorough search of his person failed to bring to light any notes or proofs that he was what we took him for. Nevertheless, it was clear that he was a Southerner, that he had no business in the city, and it was thought best to hold him a prisoner.

Before informing the man of this intention, I gleaned from him the names of several farmers in the vicinity, and of half a dozen persons at Bridgeport, and some information as to the events which had transpired there during the past three or four months. He had with him a military paper certifying that Samuel Green had been examined and found unfit for military service by reason of being addicted to epileptic fits. Conversing with him about the state of his health, I found that Green had an average of about three fits per week, and that each one generally lasted him about an hour. He carried with him a pint bottle of medicine which some doctor had fixed up for him, and he took this stuff as a sort of assistance to enable him to recover from the attacks. This was all I wanted to know, except one thing, and that he quickly told me. He stated that none of the troops with Bragg or Longstreet were enlisted in that vicinity, so that if I were captured, there would be no one to come forward and announce that I was an impostor. Mr. Green's goods and chattels, even to his military paper and pint bottle of medicine, were seized for the benefit of the United States of America, and I had a plan. He growled and complained, but there was no help. In case he had a fit, there were a dozen army surgeons within call; and when I came back, if he could establish his innocence, it would be right and proper to pay him for his goods. These goods were contained in a sack prepared for the purpose, to be slung over the shoulder, and I had picked

it up and started out, when Green, in his ill-humor, called out:

"If you are going to rob a man of all his goods, why not take his clothing to boot?"

Exactly so. I had reasons for believing that the man had been tramping around through the Confederate camps not three days back, and if I were to personate him, it would be well to go to the end of the line. I therefore returned, informed him that I wanted his garments, and in a few minutes he had exchanged for a suit of blue, though much against his will. His hat was uncomfortable, and his boots anything but a fit, being three sizes too large; but I put on the one, and stepped into the others.

It was dark, and after when my preparations were complete, and the time until nine o'clock was used up in getting supper, studying my part, and ascertaining the whereabouts of the enemy's pickets posted in the valley to the west of the town, I found that a distance of less than one hundred yards separated the pickets, who had been on terms of peace for several days past. There were two or three fences running across the valley, or parts of fences, for the soldiers had used many of the rails for firewood. There were three or four cherry trees, a few bushes, but nothing which offered shelter to any one crossing the valley to the base of the mountain. I had little hope that I should be able to get through without being discovered, but I must try. If I could sneak through, all right; if discovered, why, I was Mr. Green, and would give them such excuses as I had at hand.

"Good-by, Cap'n Jack," said a grizzly old soldier who was on the advance post, as I got ready to leave. "I wouldn't try to go from here to Lookout Mountain for a million dollars. They'll catch you, sure as you're born!"

Shaking hands all around, and listening carefully once more to the instructions kindly given me, I slung the sack over my shoulder, and started forward toward the Confederate line. There was a cowpath leading along here, and as soon as I had got five or six rods from the picket, I turned to the right, crept on until I came to a fence, and then moved along beside it. In five minutes I was between two of the Confederate outposts, and not forty feet from either of them, one being on each side of

the fence. I could see the men through the gloom, leaning on their muskets, or walking to and fro. On my hands and knees, creeping in and out of the corners, I passed the pickets without being seen, or in any way interrupted. Just before I came to the creek, I arrived at a knoll from which I could look down into a depression, where was stationed the reserve picket. Quite a large fire had been kindled, the bank hiding it from the sight of the Union pickets; and I went near enough to count the coffee-pots which the men had placed on the sticks to secure an evening lunch. The fence stopped right here, and I must go either to the right or left to flank the reserve. I was about fifteen feet from the end of the fence, and was just about to move, when a soldier got up from the fire, came up to the fence, and began pulling at a pole for firewood. He was hardly twelve feet from me, and yet I do not think he would have discovered my presence but for an accident. In pulling at the pole, he toppled over a whole length of fence against which I was crouched, and it fell upon me, flattening me to the ground, and pressing so hard that I was forced to cry out.

"Halloo! who in the old Harry is there?" inquired the soldier, coming up and removing the rails.

"It's me," I replied, as soon as I could get my breath. "Now I'll bet fifty dollars that I shall have another fit to pay for this!"

The soldier lifted up the rails, helped me to my feet, jerked me around, and inquired:

"Who are you, and what are you doing here? What business have you skulking around here?"

"Me? Why, I'm Green the peddler, who has fits. Let me see"—looking into his face—"aint you the fellow who bought a pipe of me the other day over by the railroad?"

"No—I didn't buy a pipe," he replied. Then, kicking at my sack, he continued, "What ye got in there?"

I gave him a list of the articles, told him that some colonel, whose name I could not remember, had told me to go down to the picket line, lie by all night, and then pass into town in the morning; and finally requested that we go to the fire, where I would show him my stock in trade.

He shouldered one end of the pole, I the other, and we went forward among the reserve. As we threw the pole down, several of the men looked up, and one of them uttered a laugh, and exclaimed:

"Hang me, if there haint one of those cussed peddlers of notions! Halloo! old rags, where have you been for a week past?"

"Is any one to blame for being unfortunate?" I inquired, in an offended tone, and acting as if hurt.

"I didn't mean anything," continued the soldier, making a place for me to sit down beside him. "Have you got a tip-top pipe that you'll sell cheap?"

The man had met with peddlers in the Confederate camps, and I had made a lucky start. As the other soldiers crowded around, I untied the sack, brought out several pipes, and soon disposed of half a dozen, taking Confederate notes in payment. Not a word was said to show that the soldiers had the least suspicion of me. If I had been discovered closer to the advance pickets, the case might have been different. One of them showed me a knife, which he said he had purchased of me one day on the crest of Missionary Ridge, and two or three more remembered having met me before! Had I needed anything further to convince me that the real Green was a Confederate and a spy, I should have had proof in the remark of a corporal to whom I had made a present of some paper and envelops:

"I have heard that Bragg employed a peddler as a spy on the Yanks. How is it? Are you the chap? Have you been in town lately?"

I gave him such replies as to leave him in doubt whether the rumor was true; and as to his last question, informed him that I was going to attempt to get into Chattanooga in the morning. The men offered me a place by the fire, and a blanket, if I wanted to stop all night; but I thanked them, and trudged on toward the mountain. In all my experience I had never had so little trouble in passing the picket line, and getting on good terms with my enemies. I secured the name of the captain, two sergeants and three corporals at the reserve, and the number of the regiment; and in case I should be arrested, I now had several good witnesses to prove what I desired.

Tramping along, whistling and singing, I soon bumped against a camp sentinel. He was disposed to call the corporal, to see if he had authority to let me into the camp; but when I had slipped a pipe into his hand, he was convinced that I had a perfect right to go where I pleased. I bribed him out and out, but of course he must not be credited with not suspecting my identity. The force in the valley was not a large one, the enemy having his great strength hidden on the mountains and behind the ridges. I could make no sort of an estimate, travelling around in the dark, and having had such good luck with the men already encountered. I determined to secure quarters for the night. It was now nearly eleven o'clock, and I was within half a mile of the railroad track, which curves around the base of Lookout Mountain before striking the valley. The tents were thicker here, the force being greater, and I knew that if I prowled around much longer some one would ask me unpleasant questions. To get quarter in any of the tents, I must awaken the inmates, and it made no difference which tent I selected, all being alike to me.

Just as I halted, and was about to lift a blanket hung at a door, some one came out of a tent about a rod above me. I heard the rattle of a sword, made out that it was an officer, and saw him move off among the tents at a rapid pace. As he came out of the tent, I caught sight of a light within; and when he had gone, I concluded to make a closer examination.

Leaving my sack, I crept forward, lifted the flap, and saw that the tent belonged to an officer. Two or three uniforms were hanging up, there was an extra sword, two camp beds, a writing-desk, and various other property. I could see no one up or down, and I crawled through and made my way to the writing-desk, which was covered with maps and papers, as was also a board near by. Picking up one of the documents, I read:

"General Bragg instructs you to move—Wednesday—getting artillery in position—a week more at the furthest must witness the surrender—brigade commanders will—"

Reading thus far, skipping along down the page, I saw the importance of the document, and pocketed it. Then hastily

gathering up every other letter in sight, I crammed them into my pockets, and crawled out of the tent. Picking up the sack, I found that I was unobserved, and so I turned sharp to the right, walked forty or fifty rods, and then entered a tent. One of the inmates awoke as I was getting in, but when I explained my wants to him, he gave his consent, and I stretched myself out on a spare blanket. I believed that I had secured possession of some valuable documents, and though anxious to peruse them, I had no opportunity to do so, and must attend to secreting them. In fifteen minutes after I had lain down the inmates of the tent were all sound asleep, and then I went to work. Having no fit place to stow the documents, I removed my boots, made an incision in the lining, and in the course of half an hour had tucked all the papers into the bootlegs, and so secured them that a second glance would be necessary to find them. This accomplished, I drew on my boots, hauled the sack under my head, and in five minutes was asleep, knowing nothing more until an hour after daylight.

The two soldiers who occupied the tent were cooking breakfast when I woke up, and it was an easy thing to bargain with them for a share in the meal. After that was disposed of, they wanted each a new knife; and having no money, I purchased from one a uniform cap and blouse, and from the other a pair of pants, thus giving me a Confederate outfit. The articles were stored away in the bottom of the sack, and I was about to move off, when a soldier lounged along and inquired:

"Say, Sol, the devil's to pay up at headquarters. I don't know what's up, but the shoulder-strappers have arrested all the sentinels on duty between ten and twelve last night, and have taken three or four tents down to search for something."

I knew what that "something" was. It was the papers in my bootlegs, and I made up my mind to get out of the neighborhood as soon as possible. Travelling along, I decided that I need not be alarmed unless some new occurrence caused me to be suspected. If they had arrested the sentinel who let me in and who had taken my bribe, he would, if like other sentinels, deny that I had crossed his beat, for fear that it might come out that I had bribed him. Unless he "owned up," there was

no one in camp who could dispute my assertion that I had come into it from the west instead of the east side. Half of any plan is having confidence in yourself, and so, when I had made up my mind that no one had any business to suspect me, I trudged along without much care.

Stopping now and then to "dicker" with the soldiers, I at length came to the railroad track and the base of the mountain. Here I began to find the enemy's strength. Looking up the mountain, I could see earthworks and guns, and there were defenses, cannon, batteries of artillery, and "heaps" of troops whichever way I looked. I could see no road up the mountain—not even a path by which a goat could ascend, and I greatly wondered how the soldiers and cannon found their way up. Some regiments were in line, some changing positions, some in camp doing nothing, and I passed about without eliciting much attention. I was standing on the railroad track looking cautiously about me, when some one gave me a tremendous slap between the shoulders, and a hearty voice cried out:

"How are you, old pancakes—how's your grandmother!"

I turned around and stood face to face with a second lieutenant of infantry, whose actions at once proved him considerably intoxicated. He was just that far "over the bay" to feel jolly, and to care not a straw for the dignity attached to his position. Seeing his situation, I replied that my health was not very good, and as for my respected grandmother, she had been laid in the tomb so many years that I seldom troubled myself about her feelings.

"Bully for you!" continued the officer, shaking hands with me. "If I were General Bragg, durn me if I wouldn't make you a division commander within an hour! You're a sockdologer, you are—a regular steamboat on wheels! What ye got in that bag?"

I enumerated the articles, and then opened the sack for his inspection. He selected one article after another until he had his hands full, and then started to move off without paying me. I mentioned the fact to him, when it would have been wiser to have let him gone his way, and his conduct changed in an instant, as any other drunken man's conduct will.

"What!" he exclaimed, dropping the articles on the ground, "what you charg-

ing officers anything! cuss me if I don't take all you've got!"

I saw that I had made a mistake, but he would accept of no excuses, and at once ordered a soldier to take up the bag and follow him. I could not lose the whole without a struggle, for deprive me of the sack, and I would be arrested within five minutes. Protesting against his actions, I was following along after him, when he pulled out his revolver and shot plump at my head. He was not twenty feet away, and I did not see his action until he pulled the trigger. Nothing but his unsteady hand saved my life. As it was, the bullet passed close to my ear, and buried itself in the shoulder of a soldier a few feet behind. Hundreds of men saw the movement and heard the man scream, and we were immediately surrounded by an excited crowd, among which I saw a division commander, two brigadier generals and several lesser officers. For the first two or three minutes, there was no opportunity to explain, and afterwards such a thing was useless. One of the brigadiers took the sack away from the lieutenant, and that worthy immediately charged that I was a prowler who had no business in the camp, and demanded that I should be arrested and searched.

Nothing is right in time of war but might, and I was the next moment led off to a tent, a soldier lugging the sack after me. Three or four of the officers came in, a guard was stationed to keep back the crowd, and then came the moment which was to show me if I were fitted to play the part of Samuel Green. It came to me like a flash that Samuel Green had fits, and the next moment, after throwing my arms around, I fell down, shutting my teeth, fixed my eyes, and set my legs to shaking.

"Call in Dr. Royer, captain—the man is in a fit," remarked a voice, and the next moment the doctor came in.

He felt of my pulse, unbuttoned my vest and shirt, rubbed whiskey on my throat, and pronounced it a fit. It was my intention to remain in that fit ten or fifteen minutes, but a sudden command for some one to remove my boots, convinced me that it would be safer to come out of it. I opened my eyes, drew my legs up, drank some of the liquor, and in two or three minutes was able to sit up. Before answering any questions. I took a draught

from the pint bottle, and then laid my document in the hand of the doctor.

"Why—the devil—why—ha! ha! ha!" laughed the doctor, handing the paper to the others to read. "Woodstock must be blind drunk to pitch into a harmless fellow like this!"

The officers read the document, laughed and joked, and the result was that I was told to pick up my sack and pass on. I made haste to do so, and passed along the railroad track around the mountain, scarcely able to realize that within thirty minutes I had got into a bad scrape and out of it. I found no difficulty in trading with the soldiers, as I took any sort of money and sold my goods at prices which would have made a sutler's heart go down to his boots. Keeping my eyes about me, I had at noon collected all the information which I wanted from the valley, and determined to leave it and go up the mountain. A soldier whose dinner I shared, gave me directions where to find a road which zig-zagged up the hill. By passing along the railroad track, and following it around the mountain's base, he informed me that I could strike the road by which all the cannon, men and supplies had been taken to the crest of the hill. Deeming this the better way to go up, and thinking to come down by the trail, I planned accordingly.

The soldier's companions were on duty, and just as I was ready to go, a sergeant came along and requested him to serve on a detail for a short time. As he was not to be gone over half an hour, I agreed to remain in his tent until his return, he seeming to have more confidence in my honesty than in that of his companions, knowing that a soldier would "pick up things" whenever opportunity offered. There is an old saying that delays are dangerous, but the soldier had not been gone ten minutes when I had reason to believe that my delay had saved my life. It was raw cold weather, and the tent was fastened up as close as it could be. Lying stretched out on one of the rude beds, I directly heard several men come up, meet some one at the door of the tent, and then a voice asked:

"Have you seen a man around here with a bag of notions on his back—a short fellow, dressed in citizen's clothes, wearing a black mustache, and having a scar under his right eye?"

"No—not up here," answered another voice, "but I saw him about a mile below here this forenoon. Why—what about him?"

"Just let me get eyes on him and I'm good for a hundred dollars," continued the first voice. "He played the durndest game up at corps headquarters you ever heard of. You know Longy's (Longstreet's) scout, Bob Thomas? Well, as near as I can get hold of the story, Bob was sent into Chatty (Chattanooga) the other day. He was fixed out with papers as some one else, had an old suit of clothes and a bag of goods, and Longy got word last night that Bob was in jail. Some one in his clothes and carrying his sack has been passing along the valley. Bob, you know, has red whiskers and mustache, while this man is altogether different in look. They think he's a Yank, and we are after him. This morning, he—"

I sat up on the bed, heard him relate my adventure with the lieutenant, and then I crept softly across the tent, and looked out to see a sergeant and seven men moving away. I saw it all in a moment. My peddler was a genuine spy, and his exemption paper, fits and medicine had been prepared for the occasion. Some citizen of the town had notified Longstreet of his man's capture, and my game was played. The man with the sack would swing if they caught him.

While I was thinking I was also acting. I must leave my sack behind, take a new disguise, and be off before the soldier's return. Opening the sack, I poured its contents over behind one of the beds, drew out the uniform, hid the sack, and in five minutes was a private soldier of the Confederate army—Longstreet's corps. There was an overcoat on one of the beds, and I "borrowed" it, feeling that when its owner discovered my hidden property, he would be satisfied with the exchange. Being all ready, I picked up a musket, slung a cartridge box over my shoulder and stepped out and walked off as if I feared no one. The change in my appearance was so great that I did not believe any one would know me, but I soon had a chance to see. Walking less than half a mile, I came upon the sergeant and his file, who were returning to pursue the chase in another direction. He stopped me and asked about the peddler. I pointed over toward Missionary

Ridge, and cooked up a story of meeting the man there two hours before. Two of the file were two of the reserve picket whom I had talked with at the camp-fire in the valley, but they had no suspicions of me whatever.

When they had passed on, going in the direction pointed out, I pursued my walk. My path was full of soldiers, but they gave me no notice. I fell in with about a dozen travelling my way, and who were going up the mountain, I thought, but they badgered me so about my boots, which as I have remarked were too large, beside being covered with mud, that I dropped behind. Half an hour after, there was scarcely any one in sight, and coming to a farmhouse, I concluded to go in. There was a guard at the gate, to prevent malicious trespass, and one of the finest bloodhounds I ever saw sat on the doorstep.

"Look out for the brute, partner," cautioned the soldier as I opened the gate. "He's one of the real old nigger-hunters, and is as cross as blazes."

I always had a constitutional fear of dogs, large or small, and getting part way to the door, I hesitated. The hound eyed me keenly, growled once or twice, showing fangs which would almost bite through a bar of iron, and then he came down to meet me. He snuffed at my feet, smelled of my hands, and to my great astonishment, began wagging his tail and frisking around as if he had met with an old friend. The guard was as astonished as myself, but the dog continued to show his love and good-feeling, and I passed into the house. There was no one at home but a woman, the wife of a soldier then guarding Union prisoners on Belle Isle. Her greeting was anything but cordial, she having probably received a hundred similar calls. However, when I laid two Confederate ten dollar bills on the table and asked for a picked-up dinner, her frowns cleared away, and she had the meal ready in five minutes.

While eating and talking, I observed a new pair of woollen socks hanging near the fireplace, and made a purchase of them for another note. Confederate money was pretty good money then, especially in that region, and the woman must have thought me a general in disguise.

My socks were old, and the boots chafed my feet, and I therefore determined to put the new ones on. Learning this, the

woman suggested that I wash my feet, and she fixed a pail of water at the back door. I drew off and left my boots at the door, and when I returned, the woman was studying at a paper which I recognized as one I had hidden in my boot.

"This seems to be an important document," she remarked, laying it on the table. "Why do you carry your boots full of papers?"

I told her that they were some private papers which I did not wish to lose, but she looked at me as if she did not believe the statement. I felt angry and chagrined at my imprudence, and hurried into the boots and got out of the house as soon as possible. Apprehending some misfortune, I hardly spoke to the guard, hurrying up the route almost on the run. The paper which I had taken from the table was in my pocket, and desiring to replace it in my boots, I turned aside into a clump of shrubs and vines to make the transfer. I had scarcely sat down, when three soldiers passed, and in a moment more I heard voices in excited conversation.

"The woman says she saw more than a hundred papers sticking out in the inside of his bootlegs, and the one she read was signed by General Bragg!"

I heard this, and laid down and hugged the ground as closely as possible. My own carelessness had got an enemy on my trail again.

"Run down till you meet those men," continued the guard, "and they'll hurry up and help you overhaul him. Be quick, before he gets away!"

Off came the boot, in went the paper, back went my foot, and then I rose up and let myself out for a run. Turning toward the mountain, I ran up the side, covered by bushes and small trees. The way was so steep and difficult that running was soon impossible, and I stopped a moment to "blow," just as the deep bay of a hound and the shouts of men reached my ears. The soldiers were after me, and the bloodhound had taken my scent! I could neither walk nor run—it was a mere scramble. Leaping over rocks, jumping over ravines, drawing myself up the banks, I had just reached a path winding up the mountain, when I heard the bay of the hound not thirty rods away. He was coming along at a slow pace, my jumps puzzling him. My boots were a hindrance to fast speed, but

I ran down the trail at a gait which would have bothered an Indian to beat. Thirty rods down, I came to a loghouse set in a bit of a valley on the left hand side. Some distance beyond the house was a large outdoor cellar, excavated from the hillside. It had no door, and running by, I saw the dark mouth of the trap and turned and made for it. As I went in, I turned enough to notice that there were no windows on that side of the house, and that no one was in the yard. The voice of the hound and the shouts of the men came to me as I ran in, but there was no alternative. The dog would overhaul me in five minutes if I kept on, and I had determined to make a stand and shoot him. The cellar was twenty or twenty-five feet long, ten feet wide, and as dark as pitch when one looked toward the back part. At the far end I found two barrels, a board or two, and hustled them around for a sort of breastwork.

Just as I had completed all the defence possible, the dog appeared at the door, his eyes shining like two coals of fire. Drawing my revolver, I took aim, and was about to press the trigger, when he gave a whine of joy, and came trotting in, leaping over the boards, and licking my hands with evident signs of satisfaction. Patting him on the head, I quieted his voice and antics, just as the soldiers stopped in the path opposite, and perhaps two hundred feet away. Hearing nothing further of the dog, they were puzzled to know which direction to take. I could see them plainly, and I held the dog down, and whispered to him to make him lie quiet. The soldiers—there were five of them—ran down the road a few rods and then returned; and after calling and whistling to the dog, they all came into the yard. While the four stood talking within fifty feet of me, the other one went to the house. I heard the shrill voice of a female, a loud conversation, and then the soldier joined his companions; and, accompanied by the woman, they all came towards me. I believed that the woman had seen me enter the cellar, and that death or capture was imminent. They came up within twenty feet of me and stopped.

"I haint seed no one round here," whined the woman, "and I haint seed no bound."

"Well, look in the cellar and see if the fellow is there," replied one of the soldiers.

The cowards were afraid to come in themselves, withdrawing to either side, while the woman entered the door, came in a few feet, and then turned and went back, declaring that the place was empty. At this announcement the soldiers crowded in, but their eyes could not penetrate the darkness, and they soon turned away, stopping around the door to hold a consultation. They at length agreed that I had run down the path further, killed the hound, and that they should discover me in that direction. Accordingly, they all started off down the path, and were soon out of sight, bidding the woman keep a sharp lookout for me.

It was getting on toward sundown, and I debated whether to stop or to take the path up the mountain. Fearful that I might in some way be discovered if I should remain until dark, and doubting whether I could find my way up the mountain except by daylight, I concluded to risk all and reach the path again. The dog followed me out, capering and frisking, but immediately took the scent of the soldiers and ran down the path. Turning to look at him, I caught sight of a soldier about musket range off. The man held up his hand for me to stop, but I set out up the hill on the run, knowing that he was one of the pursuers. The woman came to the door in time to see me off, and I saw that I was in for it again. I had retained the musket stolen in the valley, although it had bothered my actions, and I carried it now instead of flinging it away, knowing that I should want it at the crest to complete my disguise.

After running perhaps ten minutes, I heard the bay of the hound again. The soldiers had given him my track, and he was after me. I had nothing to fear from him, as soon shown. He speedily overhauled me, but ran along by my side, playfully snapping at my legs. I was getting pretty well tired out, when I heard voices up the path, and turned aside and leaped into a thicket, the dog remaining on the path. Two or three minutes after half a dozen soldiers came along down; seeing the dog, they stopped a moment, but passed on without a suspicion of my presence. Their appearance was a lucky thing for me. They would meet my pursuers further down, tell them that they had not seen me, and this might end the chase.

As soon as they were gone, I scrambled back to the path and made up the mountain again. I was just congratulating myself on having escaped pursuit, when ill luck confronted me in the shape of two more soldiers coming down. I was close upon them before I discovered them, and so had to push on. They looked at me sharply as we passed, but as they could not have knowledge of me, I began whistling and kept on. As soon as a turn in the path had hidden them, I struck a "lope" again, and met no one for the next half mile.

It was now sundown, and I began to think of the part which I should take on reaching the crest. I could hear a drum beating and a band playing above, and saw that I was near the end of my journey. As soon as I had got rested a little, I resumed my march, and just as it was fairly dark reached the top of Lookout. I had been thinking that I should find a sentinel on the road near the crest, and felt greatly puzzled for a plan to get by him without trouble. As I came within a few rods of the top, the difficulty solved itself without my help. I came upon several soldiers at a spring beside the path, filling camp kettles. There were five soldiers and three kettles, and they were arguing how the men could carry a kettle between them and not leave an odd kettle to an odd man.

"Just in time, comrade!" shouted one of the men, as I came up. "Please give Pete a lift on his kettle."

It was just the thing I wanted; and in this way I passed the sentinel without the least trouble. As I was a stranger, I must "get in" with some of the men; and so, as we walked along, I informed my companion that I was from the valley, and had come up to look after my brother, giving his regiment as one which I knew was with Bragg over on Missionary Ridge. The soldier knew it also, and when we had ascertained that I must take another day for it, I began trying to ascertain where I should put up for the night. His own tent was crowded, the soldier said, but he knew of a tent occupied by three of his company where I could get in, as two of the men had been detailed for guard duty. This was satisfactory, and in a short time I had made friends with the occupant of the tent, and was duly installed as his guest. After supper, and while indulging in eu-

chre, I set to work to draw him out by telling him of the defences which "we" had erected in the valley and on the ridge, and then had a good excuse for asking after the preparations which had been made on Lookout. He assured me that nothing had been left undone. He showed me his hands, blistered with using the heavy tools, and then in detail gave me a list of the defences. He was strong in the belief that no human foe could wrest Lookout Mountain from the possession of the Confederates; and it really looked to me as if it would be sheer madness on the part of any army to attempt it. The path by which I came up was the poorest defended, because, as a child could see, a six-pounder planted at any turn in the trail, and supported by a company of infantry, could cut to pieces any assaulting column, if warning was given of the approach. There were earthworks at the head of the road to the southwest, on that road, on the valley path, on the crest, and he assured me that the plateau was a Gibraltar which could not be even bruised by the hammer of war. It was bruised, broken, captured and held; but there was more reason in the idea that Hooker's men would be slaughtered to the last before reaching the crest.

The soldier was a pretty fair draughtsman or artist, as I saw by two or three sketches in his knapsack. Pretending that some of his explanations were not clear, I put a pencil in his fingers, and he made a draft of the principal defences, and also of some of those on the ridge. When he had finished them, and our conversation was ended, he wadded the papers in his hand, and threw them to the back side of the tent; and I secured and hid them while he was out hunting after some tobacco. I heard him returning pretty soon, but just as he reached the tent some one called out:

"Is that you, Wheeler? Hold on a minute, I've got some news for you."

A man approached, and, as I suspected, he proved to be one of the men who had met me on the mountain. He had also met my pursuers, who gave him the whole story, and he was now relating it as a choice bit of gossip.

"He didn't come up here, because I asked the sentinel at the path," said the soldier, in conclusion; "but he may come

to-morrow, and so I'll give you his description."

And he went on, and gave such a fair description of my face and old boots that I would have been able to pick the man out from a hundred had I been searching. When he was through, he suddenly announced:

"O, I had forgotten! I got a letter from Hannah to-day, and she wrote most a page about your mother. Come over to the tent, and I'll read it to you."

"But I've got company in my tent," replied my host.

"O, hang your company!" continued the other; "he wont dissolve while you are gone."

"Hang your company!" was a suggestive sentence to me, and a load was taken from my mind as the two moved off. I must cut and run, get some new disguise, alter my looks, or "brass it out." Which should I do? I had caught sight of a pair of scissors when the soldier opened a "housewife" in his knapsack, and I had them out in a moment, and in three minutes had clipped my mustache to the hide. Then, from my wallet, I selected a strip of black court plaster, ran it across my cheek, and this was all I could do. I had scarcely time to finish, and to replace the scissors, when the soldier returned. He looked at me curiously, and then, puzzled to know how I had changed, remarked upon it. I replied that he had been deceived about the mustache, and that I had raked my face with my knife during his absence, thus accounting for the presence of the plaster. He was satisfied, or seemed to be, and as the drum beat "lights out" at that moment, he hastily spread up a bed, we covered up, and he extinguished the light. He did not even refer to the gossip which had been retailed at the door of the tent, and for this reason I believed that he suspected me. He was a keen sharp fellow, about twenty-five years old, a Virginian by birth, receiving his education at Harvard; and if there were grounds for suspicion, he was just the man to entertain them. Being a gentleman in breeding, he was too hospitable to turn me out of the tent, and too courteous to disturb me with his thoughts until he had reasons. But I had a presentiment that my fate was in his hands somehow, and the feeling had stood

me so well in other instances, that I did not attempt to banish it now.

It was dangerous to attempt to leave the crest at night, guarded as every path would be, and I was as uncomfortable as one could well be under mental anxiety. We both laid upon the same blankets, but had separate ones to cover us, so that we were at least four feet apart. Not a word was said after our "good-nights," and a third party would have supposed that we were bent on sleep. But I was deceiving him, and the result proved that he was playing the same game. We had been lying quiet for half an hour, I against the side of the tent, and he near the door, when I heard a low snuffing near my head. Reaching out my hand, I raised the canvas about a foot, and my friend the bloodhound crawled under as quietly as a mouse and laid down beside me. If the soldier heard us, he did not show it. I was greatly surprised at the presence of the dog, and his coming also added to my anxiety. He might have followed on alone, but the chances were that some of my pursuers had come with him. This belief was soon strengthened by hearing some one whistling for the hound. I had my arm over his neck, and he did not move.

It was plain as daylight that I must leave the camp that night, but it was nearly as plain that I would be captured or shot if attempting it. For another hour I laid there racking my brains for a plan, and then I felt, more than heard, my companion carefully raise himself up. Two or three minutes passed, I being all attention, and he then cast off his blankets and crawled to the door. Here he hesitated for several minutes, but, as if making up his mind that he was right, he crawled out, and I heard him come around to my side of the tent and then move off. He was going to inform on me! As soon as sure that he was out of hearing, I rose up, got hold of his overcoat, which he had used for a pillow, put it on, and then left the tent, followed closely by the hound. I had not taken my musket, and knowing that even the seconds were precious to me, I quickly made my way to the head of the path by which I had ascended the mountain. As expected, I saw the sentinel right at the path. The others were some distance either way, the guard-tent

was ten or fifteen rods off, and I walked boldly up to the man, and said:

"I've lost a gold watch worth three hundred dollars. I was out after water just at dark, and I believe I must have dropped it near the spring. I want to go down to see."

"O! ha! ha! That's played out with us long ago!" he replied. "No one passes here without the countersign."

"Well, here's the countersign, then!" I remarked, going closer to him, and bending forward as if to whisper in his ear.

I had my revolver in my hand, turned end for end, and I meant to hit him on the head with the butt of it. He either caught sight of the weapon, or suspected some injury, for he threw up his gun across my breast, to bar my progress. The hound had stood beside me very quiet, but the moment the gun came up, he leaped under it like a flash, caught the soldier by the throat, bore him down, and I ran down the path just as the powerful fellow gave utterance to a terrible yell. There was no room for further deception, and I ran for life, the dog overtaking me in about two minutes. I heard the soldiers shouting, knew that I would be pursued, and my old boots were picked up and put down as if drawn over the feet of a trotting horse. I think I made a gain of at least half a mile before there was any great alarm, and then three or four muskets were fired. I was too far ahead to hear if any one was sent after me, but taking it for granted, I "pegged in," with scarcely a halt until reaching the house and the outdoor cellar. It was hard on to three miles from the crest to the house, but going down hill is fast motion, and I do not think I was more than thirty minutes, if that, making the distance.

I at first decided to hide again in the cellar, but reflecting that I was pretty thoroughly posted as to the defences, having my friend's drawings beside, I then determined to get into Chattanooga before daylight, if possible. I judged that I was about five miles from the city, and that the time was about eleven o'clock. The fact that I got out of the town without much difficulty was not a guaranty that I could get in without being arrested. It would be a dangerous task to attempt to return by the valley, and I therefore concluded

to take to the river. If I could secure something to float me, I might pass down the river unseen, and land at the town; and I at once proceeded to the bank and cast about for boat or raft. If any one had pursued me down the path, they had given up the chase, and I now found no one to trouble me. Keeping close to the river, I passed down opposite the house where I had first met my friend the dog, but I had not then succeeded in finding so much as two good-sized sticks. From this point I could plainly hear the soldiers in the valley, and knew that I should directly strike the point where the extreme left wing of the army rested on the bank. Passing down fifteen or twenty rods further, I was about to despair of finding a float, when I suddenly stumbled over some one stretched out on the ground.

"Whazzer doing 'ere? Whazzer kickin' feller for? Whazzer want of me?"

Before I knew what had happened a man sat up, looked about, fell back, and slept again. There was a strong smell of whiskey in the air, and the words of the unknown showed him to be drunk. Looking closer, I saw another man, a camp kettle, a dying fire, and three or four shirts hanging on a line suspended between two saplings. I saw in a moment that the fellows had come to the spot in the afternoon to wash their garments, and getting drunk, had remained there. This was not all. After waiting until I was sure that the man slept, I approached closer to the water, and to my great joy discovered a large scow moored to the bank by a grapevine. Setting on it were a washtub and washboard which the boys had borrowed at the house. There were several large blocks of stone lying about, and it was easy to conclude that the scow had been used to float building material down to the town.

As the men were in a measure helpless, I had no fear of them, and determined to capture them both. Removing the tub and board to the bank, I took the first man by the feet and carefully drew him on board. He growled and mumbled, but did not awake, and I soon had the other man beside him. There was neither oar nor paddle, but I went to the fence, secured a long pole, and then I was ready. In my haste and excitement I had forgotten all about the dog, until the lumbering old

craft was moving away. Then there came a whine from the bank, a dark body shot through the air, and the hound landed at my feet.

As soon as getting clear of the bank and into the current, I laid my pole down and then stretched myself out. Without word or sound we drifted rapidly down, not even being seen by any of the Confederates; and when getting to the head of the town, I worked the old scow in so that I landed without accident, and the sentinels aided me to discharge the drunken cargo.

It was my intention to make an early call on the man whom I had jailed before leaving, and to do my best to have him hung; but after I had reported at headquarters, taken a few hours' sleep, and walked around to the jail, I was grieved

to learn that he was probably safe among his friends, some outsiders having aided him to escape that very night.

A few days later, when Hooker's men crossed the valley and arrived at the base of Lookout, I was at the head of the column to point out the path and the road. I did not go up among the clouds with them, nor did I believe that a man of them would reach the crest. Nevertheless, they did go up, the battle was won, and the siege of Chattanooga was raised. The dog? I had not forgotten him. He lies curled up near the stove as I write, older by several years than when we first met, but still one of the best friends I have in the world. What his reasons were for befriending me I shall never know, though I would give much to understand the singular mystery.

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## BLOSSOM AND FRUIT.

Arnold, Theodore

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## BLOSSOM AND FRUIT.

BY THEODORE ARNOLD.

CLIFTON BURT elevated his heels and set them carefully on the window ledge, his chair finely balanced and biped, and taking the cigar from his mouth, suffered a long thin wreath of smoke to curl from his lip up among the stucco abortions of the ceiling.

"A queer business," I repeated. "I don't see how it came about."

"Well, I don't mind telling you," he said, leisurely, when the smoke-wreath had run its length. "You are young, and may profit by my experience." Which was pretty good from a fellow of twenty-seven to one of twenty-five.

However, I swallowed the affront and waited for him to go on. It was so seldom one got Clinton Burt to speak of his private affairs and feelings, that it was best to make much of the mood when it did come.

Several circumstances conspired to produce this present complacency of his. He and I had met now for the first time in years, after having been Damon and Pythias at school, and having kept up a regular correspondence for several years after parting. Then Clinton's business, pretty good before,

had taken a new start up. Sugar had gone up several cents on the pound, just as he had two cargoes come in from Cuba. Lastly, we had just risen from a good dinner, washed down by a bottle of sparkling Catawba worth all the sham Ports, Champagnes, Madeiras, etc., made in the cellars of liquor dealers. These influences combined had so expanded my friend's heart that there were glintings of light from even its inmost recesses.

With a faint sigh he began.

"You see, Anne and I married quite young. I was but twenty-one, and she one year younger, which is being a little in a hurry. Not that I am sorry for it. I don't believe in wishing to change what is unchangeable. And if we had waited to grow cooler and more thoughtful, why perhaps a trouble as bad would have come in some other shape. We went to New York for a trip, and for one month were as happy as two butterflies. Then we came back and went to Swan's boarding-house, the greatest place in town for singing, and dancing, and card-playing, and flirtations. When we

went, I promised Swan that we would stay all winter, as he had another offer for his vacant rooms; so we were fixtures for six months at least.

"Out of her little fortune, Anne had provided herself a fine wedding outfit, and there was not a lady at Swan's who dressed in better taste or was more entirely bewitching than she was. You know Anne was always called handsome, even by people who didn't like to acknowledge it. Well, she immediately became the presiding deity of the establishment, though the house did not lack for pretty girls or grand dowagers. Moreover she managed to make friends of them all, so that they seemed to be quite pleased with her success. I can't say how they felt in their hearts.

"Phil Baxter was boarding there at that time. You know Phil. A gay dare-devil, as bold as brass, and, well, there's no denying that he is about as handsome a fellow as ever stepped. Whatever Providence wanted to give him those great bright eyes with their long curling lashes for, is more than I can imagine. The man did anything but mischief with them, and a pair of little gray eyes with short winkers to them would have done just as well for seeing purposes.

"After a while I began to see that those eyes began to turn pretty often on Anne, and he got a way of dancing with her oftener than with any one else, and of being her partner at cards, and of turning her music when she played. For some time I didn't mind, for Anne and I understood each other, I thought. We had agreed not to be very sweet in company, for one had been sickened by the actions of Jack White and his wife, and didn't want to get laughed at. For half a year after they were married, Jack and his wife used to sit side by side in company, dancing together always, and neither speaking to, nor smiling on any one else. And after the six months were over they took as decided a turn the other way, and would rather speak to or look at any one, than each other.

"Well, since Anne and I had talked it over, I didn't mind her being attended by other gentlemen, though I did not think it best that any one gentleman should distinguish h'mself by his attentions. After a while I just mentioned this to her, and added that Phil had been too attentive to her that evening, and that there was no

need of his turning music for her when she knew the piece by heart.

"To my surprise she blushed and was silent. I had expected her to look at me with innocent surprise, perceive that I was right, and immediately promise to be more distant with him in future. The embarrassment and silence disconcerted me immediately, and a faint ghost of a suspicion began to creep into my mind. Could it be that Anne cared for admiration, or to please any one but her husband? The thought tormented me, and, try as I would, I could not banish it. I began, too, to watch her more closely, though I was ashamed to do it. I saw that she treated Phil with a kind of distance, but she also showed the same distance in her manner to me. It wasn't coldness, but only a slight chill, enough to be felt, but not anything to mention.

"Phil didn't seem to mind, but went on just the same, persistently admiring, attentive and gay, and behaving in such a manner that it was impossible to resent without appearing too ready to put an evil construction upon actions in themselves innocent. One doesn't like to have the proverb, 'Evil to him who evil thinks,' quoted to one. I saw, too, that he was less attentive when he thought that I was observing him, and that my looking at him was a signal for him to leave Anne and go to some one else. Of course, this was confoundedly galling. It was accusing me of jealousy, and intimating that I, and not Anne, was the obstacle in the flirtation.

"Once seeing this, I spoke again to Anne, and this time I spoke sharply. I accused her of flirting, and almost commanded her to put a stop to the fellow's pretensions. She answered haughtily that she would not listen to such insulting language. She was not accountable for my jealous disposition, she said, and scorned to defend herself from my charge.

"Well, well, old fellow, don't get angry! The long and short of it was that we quarrelled, and she did as she had a mind to out of defiance, and I tormented her all I could. An outsider can scarcely believe the degree of misery which may be suffered from apparently trivial causes. One glance from Phil Baxter's bright languishing eyes was almost enough to make me commit suicide. and night after night I stayed out of the parlor, and absented myself from the com-

pany, for fear lest, in my desperation, I should do something of which I might repent. Of all things I dreaded being ridiculous.

"The crisis came one fine evening. Our whole troupe had organized an expedition to a hotel ten miles out of town where we were to have a supper and a dance, and ride back after midnight. It was a beautiful evening in April, and everything seemed to promise a successful pleasure-party. We went in barouches, twenty of us, and as evil luck or evil planning would have it, Phil Baxter with that flirting Carrie Blake rode with Annie and me. Phil seemed to be completely taken up with Carrie, and Anne and I sat quietly side by side. I couldn't talk gay nonsense, for I was in torment. Anne had been very cool with me before starting, and had even asked me, sneeringly, if I had laid out my rule of conduct for her guidance that evening. I felt that she was in no mood to spare my feelings. Yet, as we rode along in the twilight, my heart yearned toward her. I would have given the world to be reconciled to her. As I sat there at her side, I felt an impulse to slip my hand under her shawl and clasp the little hand that I knew was folded there with my ring upon it. I even made a motion to do so, but was checked by pride and fear. As likely as not she would repulse me. Then I remembered her manner at starting, and the tender impulse died. Even while I was hesitating, she broke her silence, as though impatient of it, and, leaning forward, joined in the gay talk of the two opposite us. Then when we reached the hotel, she took Phil Baxter's hand and stepped to the platform before I could get round from my side. She ran right up to the dressing-room with the other ladies, and came down with them, ours being an informal party, and the ladies all voting ceremony a bore. When we sat down to supper, there was Phil Baxter at her other elbow.

"I was determined not to make a fool of myself, and by a great effort managed to get up a lively conversation with the lady next me. But, all the time the chatting and laughing on the other side rang in my ears, and if the lady I talked with hadn't been a simpleton, she would have perceived that my remarks were not always sensible nor *apropos*. And Anne was as pretty as a pink that night, as if to make my pain greater. She fairly sparkled, and when she took my

arm to go up to the dancing-hall where another party were to meet us, in spite of every provocation, I longed to bend and kiss her pink dimpling cheek.

"Well, we got through the evening after a fashion. I couldn't say that Phil, or any other gentleman, was offensively attentive, though she was admired; but in the state of mind which I had reached anything was torture. When we started to go home, Carrie Blake, pretending to have quarrelled with her escort, fastened herself upon me, and, of course, Anne took Phil's arm, and sat beside him.

"Perhaps you think that wasn't much. But, I tell you, my hands were clenched all the way home, and every word I spoke came through my set teeth.

"Reaching home at last, as Phil helped Anne from the carriage, I saw him look up into her face in the bright moonlight and whisper something. She snatched her hand from him, but laughed, and ran up the steps alone. I didn't go up stairs for an hour, but stayed down stairs and pretended to read the papers. When I did go, Anne was not in bed, and, looking into her dressing-room, I saw her there lying on the lounge, apparently sound asleep. I didn't speak, but went to bed, though not to sleep, and she lay on the lounge for the rest of the night.

"The next morning I broke out again, and we had a pretty warm time. I asked her what it was that Phil had whispered to her, and at first she said that she had forgotten. Then she refused to tell. I went beyond what I meant at that, and said some pretty hard things, ending by telling her to choose between me and Phil Baxter. She retorted that I should choose between letting her live in peace with me, or leave me.

"If by living in peace you mean flirting with other men, then you had better leave," I said; and I vow to you that I didn't know what I said.

"She made no reply, and I went out. Three hours after a note was handed me. Anne wrote a few cool lines, saying that she had accepted my alternative, and that while I was reading her note she would be on her way to New York. She had taken only what had belonged to her, and had left all my property. She ended by saying that we had made a mistake in marrying each other, and that the only thing to do was never to see each other again.

"Well, I don't care about telling you how

I felt. You know I loved Anne. I said to myself that if she had loved me she would never have left me so, and if she did not love me, I was not, of course, willing to follow her. She plainly expressed her regret for having married me, and that had evidently been the cause of her coldness with me, and her flirtation with Phil Baxter. The more I loved her, the less willing would I be to coax her back to an unwelcome bondage.

"So I wrote a note as cool as her own, making her free to do as she liked, and offering to provide for her support. An answer came by return of mail declining any aid. She had enough to live on. Then our intercourse ceased. But I managed to hear something of her. She was living with a maiden aunt of hers in New York, and was well. That much was all I heard for six or seven months. I kept watching the mails, and used to tremble when the letters came. I had a half hope that she would write. But no word came.

"At the end of seven months came a piece of news that almost broke my pride down. Anne had a little son! Surely she must send for me now. I resolved that if she did I would make any concession, and give up all my jealousy at once and forever. I arranged my business quickly and went to New York so as to be near, leaving orders for any letter or message to be sent after me. No letter nor message came, but I learned that Anne was doing well, and would soon be up. I used to go out at evening and walk past the house, looking up at the windows and considering which one was hers. Once I went up to the door and inquired for her myself. She was very comfortable the girl said.

"I asked if her friends had been sent for, and the reply was, 'No sir, she has no friends to send for.'

"I turned away. Evidently she desired me to remain away from her, and the terrible thought came that perhaps she would hate the child because it was mine. I returned home, and by my lawyer sent her an offer of a yearly sum for the support of the child, or to take it myself. Both proposals were rejected, the first coldly, the second indignantly.

"Let a description of the next four years go. I don't say that I was very happy, but I got along some way. I shunned New York as I would the plague, and heard noth-

ing except that Anne and the child were living very quietly. She had lived so ever since she had been in New York, seeing but little company. So it seemed that she had not even the excuse of a desire for more freedom and gayety in leaving me. She was living voluntarily the very life which she would not tolerate with me.

"At length a long tormenting desire became irresistible. I wanted to see my child. I would never attempt to take it from her who had the best right to it, but I must see it. So I went to New York again. No matter how I watched that house. For two days the weather was bad, and I saw nothing except once a glint of a little face in the window, a white forehead with fair ringlets about it, and tossing playful arms. Then they disappeared.

"It was now five years since Anne had left me, and April had come round again. In that time I had learned something, and had grown more self-controlled and thoughtful. I knew now that I had myself to blame more than her. Of course, this did not alter our relations since she cared nothing for me, but it gave me the added pain of thinking that I had made the wreck of my own happiness.

"The first fine day I took my place to watch again, seating myself a little withdrawn under a tree in a small park near the house. It was not long before a lady and a child came down the steps, and crossed the street toward where I was. Did not I know that slight small figure? My heart felt every gesture, even the occasional toss of the head, a habit acquired when she was a girl, and wore long curls to toss back. Watching keenly as she passed near me on the other side of the fence to reach the gate, I got a glimpse of her face—no longer the blooming oval face of my Anne, but pale and delicate. The sweet mouth shut closer, faint shadows under the eyes—in short, the face of a woman who has felt the discipline of life.

"They reached the gate, came in, and turned down the walk toward the little fountain near me. The mother walked slowly, but the boy played and ran about her with sweet childish laughter and talk. That boy! The little unknown whose face I had never seen, whose features were strange to me, and yet who was my own flesh and blood! My eyes were so dim with tears that I could not see him now, though

he was so near; but I heard their voices through the tumultuous beatings of my heart. Anne stopped at the edge of the fountain, and pointed out the goldfish to the child. I could hear her soft voice, and her loving playful talk, and above all those words that pierced my heart to hear from her—‘My child.’

“‘Don’t lean so much over the water, my child. You may fall in, and then what would poor mamma do! Water is good for the little fish, but not for little boys with blue eyes and curly hair, and poor lonely mammas.’

“There were but few in the park at that time, and those, too, stayed and talked near me for some time without seeing me, till at length the boy spied me, and ran toward me. She called to him, but he did not mind, and she stood half turned from me, waiting till he should come back. He came to my knee, at first running gleefully, but growing shy as he got nearer, till he stood at a little distance looking bashfully but earnestly at me. It seemed to me at that moment that my beautiful child recognized his unknown father, looking at him with his mother’s eyes.

“I held out my hand to him. ‘My child,’ I said, almost inaudibly, a choking in my throat stopping my voice.

“He blushed and took a shy hesitating step toward me. I reached and drew him passionately to my arms. At first he seemed frightened, but I soon soothed him, giving him my watch to play with, holding him on my knee, stroking back his hair with my trembling hand, as he lisped out his admiration and delight.

“‘Come to me, dear!’ called out the mother from a little distance, not liking to come nearer. ‘Come to mamma.’

“He looked at her in laughing triumph, and held up the watch.

“She came nearer. ‘I am sorry my boy should have made so free, sir,’ she said. ‘Will you be so good as to send him to me?’

“I raised my face from the child’s hair and looked at her. She said not a word, but her face first grew crimson, then faded to deadly white. She leaned against the trunk of a tree, and for a moment we looked into each other’s faces. The boy in my arms broke the silence that it seemed neither of us could break. ‘Come here, mamma,’ he cried, gleefully, ‘and see this pretty watch.’

“Something in her face, and in my own heart made me doubt if I had not been mistaken in all these years. I held both hands out to her and repeated our child’s invitation, ‘Come here, Anne, my dear wife!’

“She hesitated, wavered, then with a little cry, came and put her arms around both me and the child!”

Clinton Burt drew a deep breath, and his eyes sparkled. “My blessing!” he whispered.

A door opened, and a curly little head was pushed in. “Papa,” said the child, “mamma says that you two have smoked long enough.”

“So we have, my lad,” laughed the father, catching the boy, and tossing him to his shoulder. “Come, Tom, let’s go up and see Mrs. Anne.”